This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

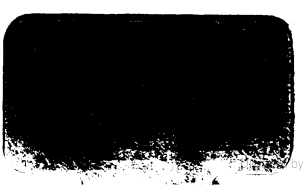
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

H 3FTB %

HARVARD
DIVINITY
SCHOOL
Andover-Harvard
Theological Library



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Bee 1.1,56,163
f 216.

MISCELLANIES.

BY THE

REV. JAMES MARTINEAU.

DIVINITY SCHOOL
LIBRARY.
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

BOSTON:
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,
111 WASHINGTON STREET.

NEW YORK:
C. S. FRANCIS AND COMPANY.

1852.

Digitized by Google

BT
28
.M27
1852
cop. 2

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

CAMBRIDGE:
METCALF AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

Mr. Martineau is already known to a wide circle of grateful readers in this country by the two volumes of "Endeavors after the Christian Life." A desire has often been expressed by those who have been familiar with his miscellaneous papers, that they should be collected in a volume. In response to such requests, a few of them are brought together and offered here; and the publishers feel that they are discharging a duty, in redeeming articles of such a character from their seclusion in the English periodicals, and bringing them to the notice of the American public.

Any thing in the nature of a review, or extended advertisement of their merits here, would be as indelicate as it is unnecessary. The rare qualities of

Digitized by Google

genius that distinguish Mr. Martineau's writings are apparent to every competent reader. It will be seen that high themes are discussed in this volume, and great names examined, that stand for widely different religious systems. The treatment, we are sure, will not be found unworthy of the subjects, but distinguished by a loftiness of tone, a catholic candor, a severity of logic and intellectual fidelity amid all the difficulties of the question in hand, a clearness of moral discrimination, and an affluence of imagery and vigorous precision of expression, which, however unusual, will not surprise those who are acquainted with any of the author's productions, and cannot fail to make these papers valuable and welcome to all earnest thinkers, even to such as cannot come into full sympathy with the theories of faith and the estimates of men which are offered to their consideration.

A better service could hardly be done, in the present state and tendencies of theological opinion among the liberal Christians of this country, than to give a selection from the theological discourses and philosophical miscellanies of Mr. Martineau, which

Digitized by Google

treat prominently and discuss thoroughly the relations of faith and records, and the differences between a spiritual and a sacrificial religion. The present volume, not having been arranged with such reference, can only in part fulfil such a service. Neither does the selection here made do full justice to their author. It is not, probably, such as he would have made, if scientific and literary considerations had controlled his choice. Certainly it is to be regretted that the papers on "Whewell's Systematic Morality," "Morell's History of Modern Philosophy," "Dr. Channing's Memoirs," "Mesmeric Atheism," and "The Creed of Christendom," could not have accompanied the larger, and perhaps more timely articles, on the Church of England, and the Battle of the Churches. These last, however, have already excited such notice and admiration in this country, that their insertion seemed imperatively called for, and, by publishing them in connection with the essay on "Church and State," unity of theme and interest is gained for a large portion of the volume. The other papers, with more of kindred topics, are in reserve for a second volume, should

Digitized by Google

another be required. In the hope that the taste of our community may be exhibited in such a demand, the present collection is commended to the public.

It may not be amiss to state, that the article on Dr. Priestley has been revised, and several errors of the English press in other essays have been corrected, for this edition, by the author.

T. S. K.

Thomas Starr King

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PAGE

The Life, Character, and Works of Dr. Priestley, ... 1

The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D. D., ... 56

Church and State, ... 105

Theodore Parker's Discourse of Religion, . . 163

Phases of Faith, ... 216

The Church of England, ... 281

The Battle of the Churches, ... 373

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MISCELLANIES.

THE LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WORKS OF DR. PRIESTLEY.*

[From the Monthly Repository for 1833.]

When a new planet is discovered, it requires time to assign it its true place in the solar system. The observer must know his own movements, or he may pronounce its progressive course to be retrograde; and he must trace it through many degrees of its track, before he can lay down its course, and estimate its speed, and measure its eccentricity. In like manner a great and luminous mind cannot have its just position in the social system allotted at once: the less so as the moral vision of mankind has no achromatic wherewith to penetrate the deep spaces of intellect. It will be long before the first confident speculations on the new phenomenon give place to the computations of truth and reason. Presumption will maintain that it is but a meteor, soon to dip below the horizon: superstition will broadly

* The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Priestley, LL D., F. R. S., in twenty-five volumes. Edited, with Notes, by John Towill Rutt. Vol. I. Life and Correspondence.

Digitized by Google

hint that any thing which swims so near the source of light and heat endangers the world's temperature, and will burn us up as it sweeps by; and many are the years on whose darkness it must shine, ere its course be traced, and it be found to be humanity's morning and evening star. The time necessary for the appreciation of a conspicuous mind will vary according to the nature of its genius and the state of society in which it is put forth; but in proportion as it addresses itself to the general mind, and finds access to the general mind, will a true verdict be speedily passed. Large masses of men are more just, more discerning, more generous, than small; more ashamed of all petty passions; less inclined to idolatry on the one hand, and to envy on the other. Imaginative genius, which in these days speaks to a splendid audience, standing amid an amphitheatre of nations, receives an answer of glorious acclaim to its cry of "*Plaudite!*" while originality in science, in theology, and even in political philosophy, appreciable at first only by schools and sects of men, waits for justice till the school or the sect becomes, in numbers and intelligence, coextensive with society at large. Scott and Byron have received the homage of their own times; but such men as Priestley or Bentham must wait the revolutions of opinion, and the regeneration of social institutions, before the due rites of honor are enacted over their graves.

Posterity, like Providence, rewards men according to their deeds. To their tribunal oblivion must give up its dead. What place will then be allotted to Dr. Priestley, among the benefactors of mankind,

Digitized by Google

we will not presume to decide; sure we are it will be no mean one. And, in the mean while, it is evident that the time is approaching for a correct and final estimate of his merits. His contemporaries, with their indiscriminate praise or censure, have, for the most part, retired from the scene; and a new generation, partly educated by his writings, and able to bear testimony to their influence, has stepped into their place. The physical science to which, for many years, he brought his annual tribute of discovery, has advanced another stage; and, apart from all rivalry and controversy, can afford to be just to his memory, and to devote a chapter of true history to its own historian. The philosophy of mind no longer pays exclusive honor to the favorites whose contempt was too strong for his living fame, and ranks among its greatest masters men who expound principles akin to his. In some measure his political sympathies seem to have been bequeathed to this generation, and the chains have been broken, for numbering whose links he became an outcast and an exile. And in theology he has had successors, who have, in some measure, diverted from him the odium which he was wont to bear exclusively: theology, however, is singularly tardy in its justice, and a fame locked up in theology is scarcely more hopeful than an estate locked up in chancery. For a fair estimate of this extraordinary man, the advantages afforded by the complexion of the times are enhanced by the new biographical materials which have been laid before us by Mr. Rutt. These materials consist of Dr. Priestley's letters to his most

Digitized by Google

intimate friends, extending in an almost unbroken series through the greater part of his life, and appended to the several sections of his autobiography. We were disposed at first to wish that more selection had been used, and that many letters, which convey no new impression of the writer's character, no indication of the spirit of his times, had been omitted; and that, notwithstanding the amount of interesting small talk which is crowded into the notes, they had been occasionally in a less excursive style of illustration. But in both these particulars it is possible that the editor may have consulted the public taste as well as his own vast stock of dissenting lore. His errors (if errors they be) are those of an affectionate and faithful memory; and the interest which, in the earlier portion of the biography, is weighed down by the indiscriminate mass of correspondence, is powerfully revived towards the close of the volume by the letters from America. It would be difficult to find, throughout the whole range of epistolary literature, any thing more touching than these letters, more pictorial than the impression they convey of the aged philosopher in his banishment, inspired by his faith to struggle with the shocks of circumstance, sustaining cheerfulness and devising good in the midst of his solitary sorrows, and feeding still an interior energy amid the waste of years. His seclusion there seems like an appointed interval between two worlds, — a central point of observation between time and eternity. There is a quietude in his letters, which gives them the aspect of letters from the dead; all the activity of life appears in

Digitized by Google

them as viewed in retrospect, and yet the peace of Heaven is still but in prospect; and they send forth tones of indescribable melancholy, which, travelling over one of the world's broadest oceans, seem like communings from an unearthly state. Yet it is not that the Christian sufferer himself desponds; the melancholy is not in him, but in the reader; and it is simply our wonder that he could uphold his spirit so nobly, which deepens the pathos of his history. It is obvious, throughout, that his self-possessed serenity comes from the past and the future, and not from the present; and there is a simplicity, a reality, in his repeated allusions to his approaching immortality, which makes us feel perpetually that, step by step, we are passing with the venerable man to his grave, to meet him on the morrow in a home whence there is no exile.

But we are anticipating. Not that we shall attempt any chronological narrative of Dr. Priestley's life; our readers will, we trust, seek that from the volume whose title stands at the head of this article; — a volume which, by recording not so much the events as the labors, the feelings, the habits, the discipline, the opinions, of a life; by exhibiting the successive phases of a mind passing from darkness towards full-orbed truth, — fulfils the expectations with which the student of human nature has a right to turn to biography. This volume brings to a close Mr. Rutt's protracted and, we fear, ill-requited labors, as editor of Dr. Priestley's Theological and Miscellaneous Works; and we would avail ourselves of the opportunity to present our readers with an

Digitized by Google

analysis of Dr. Priestley's character as a theologian, a *physicien*, a metaphysician, a moralist, and a Christian.

Few problems are more difficult than to determine the proportion between the internal and the external causes which create great minds. When genius, oppressed with difficulties, toils its way upwards to the light, it is not the difficulty that creates the genius, or every man who wrote in a garret might be a Johnson or a Sheridan. Still less, when it flutters in the atmosphere of courts, is it the warmth of throned patronage which tempts its powers into life, or every minion of royalty might be a Horace or a Molière. No mind can possess real power which does not impress you with the conviction that, wherever planted, it would have found for itself a greatness; and the office of circumstances is but to trace the track of its energies. When the stream born among the hills tumbles its waters into the valley, it has its first channel determined by the mountain surface, turned aside by pinnacles of rock, and invited by the yielding alluvial soil; but its ceaseless chafing loosens and rolls away the rugged masses that break its current, and makes for it a new and a freer way. And minds which are to fertilize the world may have the windings of their genius traced by influences from without; but the same mighty will by which they first burst forth to precipitate themselves on the world below, will undermine the most frowning barriers of circumstances, and carve out fresh courses for their power. Though Dr. Priestley would not have been unknown to the world had he,

Digitized by Google

in conformity with an intention once entertained, been doomed to a counting-house in Lisbon, it is not difficult to discern several groups of events which exercised a deep and lasting influence upon his character, and determined the relation in which he should stand to society. The first of these is to be found in his early religious education, which was conducted on the old puritanical model of constraint and rigor. There is little doubt that he is right in ascribing to this cause the deep sense of religion which he maintained through life. His was not one of those minds which are necessarily devotional, — which, under all conceivable adjustments of circumstances, betray their affinity with Heaven, — whose religious sympathies, instead of being suppressed by neglect, or overborne by the tide of adverse influence, would, like air entangled in the ocean-depths, rise the more buoyantly to their native element. Such a mind was Heber's, of which you can no more think as without piety, than you can of color without extension. Deprive it of this central attribute, and there remains an impossible combination of qualities; but Dr. Priestley's other qualities might have existed independently of his devotion, without any violation of the order of nature. In the language of logicians, it was his *property*, not his *essential difference*. And, accordingly, we believe that, for its full and permanent development, a systematic and stimulant discipline was needed; and this was abundantly administered in the coarse excitement and Sabbatarian severity of a Calvinistic education. His acknowledgment of the mis-

Digitized by Google

eries accompanying its benefits is remarkable among the confessions of orthodoxy: —

"The weakness of my constitution, which often led me to think that I should not be long-lived, contributed to give my mind a still more serious turn; and having read many books of *experiences*, and, in consequence, believing that a *new birth*, produced by the immediate agency of the Spirit of God, was necessary to salvation, and not being able to satisfy myself that I *had* experienced any thing of the kind, I felt occasionally such distress of mind as it is not in my power to describe, and which I still look back upon with horror. Notwithstanding I had nothing very material to reproach myself with, I often concluded that God had forsaken me, and that mine was like the case of Francis Spira, to whom, as he imagined, repentance and salvation were denied. In that state of mind I remember reading the account of 'the man in the iron cage,' in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' with the greatest perturbation.

"I imagine that even these conflicts of mind were not without their use, as they led me to think habitually of God and a future state. And though my feelings were then, no doubt, too full of terror, what remained of them was a deep reverence for divine things, and in time a pleasing satisfaction which can never be effaced, and, I hope, was strengthened as I have advanced in life, and acquired more rational notions of religion. The remembrance, however, of what I sometimes felt in that state of ignorance and darkness, gives me a peculiar sense of the value of rational principles of religion, and of which I can give but an imperfect description to others.

"As *truth*, we cannot doubt, must have an advantage over *error*, we may conclude that the want of these peculiar feelings is compensated by something of greater value,

Digitized by Google

which arises to others from always having seen things in a just and pleasing light; from having always considered the Supreme Being as the kind parent of all his offspring. This, however, not having been my case, I cannot be so good a judge of the effects of it. At all events, we ought always to inculcate just views of things, assuring ourselves that *proper* feelings and *right* conduct will be the consequence of them." — pp. 12, 13.

"Though, after I saw reason to change my opinions, I found myself incommoded by the rigor of the congregation with which I was connected, I shall always acknowledge, with great gratitude, that I owe much to it. The business of religion was effectually attended to in it. We were all catechized in public till we were grown up, servants as well as others: the minister always expounded the Scriptures with as much regularity as he preached; and there was hardly a day in the week in which there was not some meeting of one or other part of the congregation. On one evening there was a meeting of the young men for conversation and prayer. This I constantly attended, praying extempore with others, when called upon.

"At my aunt's there was a monthly meeting of women, who acquitted themselves in prayer as well as any of the men belonging to the congregation. Being at first a child in the family, I was permitted to attend their meetings, and growing up insensibly, heard them, after I was capable of judging. My aunt, after the death of her husband, prayed every morning and evening in her family, until I was about seventeen, when that duty devolved upon me.

"The Lord's day was kept with peculiar strictness. No victuals were dressed on that day in any family. No member of it was permitted to walk out for recreation, but the whole of the day was spent at the public meeting, or at home in reading, meditation, and prayer, in the family or the closet." — pp. 15–17.

Digitized by Google

A question of great moment is here suggested. Unitarianism has been tried upon two generations: has the experiment justified Dr. Priestley's faith in the devotional influences of truth? Or, for illustrations of the spirituality which may be conjoined with heterodoxy, must we still point to minds which, like his, have emerged from Calvinism, and may be supposed to have brought their piety thence? With the most fervent confidence in the moral power of truth, it may yet be doubted whether the largest portion of Unitarian piety has not been imported from orthodoxy; and hence many have been led to conclusions favorable to the rigid system of religious education. The fact may be admitted, and the inference denied. It is in no case the rigor, the ceremonialism, that makes the saint; regarded by itself, its whole tendency is to produce mental imbecility and disgust and unbelief; and wherever it has existed as a system, — whenever it has been made the instructor's main reliance, — these effects, and no others, have followed; not a gleam of emotion, not an impulse of holy desire, has ever come from it. But, long as it has been the receptacle of all the soul of orthodoxy, it would be strange if its machinery had not often been plied by those who have made it the vehicle of their own piety, and have sent through its dead materials that living earnestness of mind, in love of which the young will often undergo much that would else be tedious and revolting. Wherever Sabbatarianism has fallen into such hands, a devotional feeling has resulted, — not, indeed, from the system, but from its presiding

Digitized by Google

spirit. To revive the stiff regimen of our forefathers, because it sent forth a Priestley and a Lindsey, would be like reënacting the Mosaic law, in expectation of another "sweet singer of Israel." A ritual system can no more create a soul, than the study of Greek metres can make a poet. It does not, however, follow, because sabbatical constraint fails to awaken piety, that laxity must certainly succeed; and we rejoice to believe that Unitarians are beginning to perceive the error of this retaliative logic; — that, while they discard the enthralling formalities which rendered their fathers more superstitious than devout, they feel, in some degree, the solemn responsibilities of a spiritual faith; — that, while they rely as little as ever on mere externals of devotion, they think more of its interior spirit, and study more earnestly the means for its nurture.

Whilst we admit that the conflicts of mind which Dr. Priestley describes may have occasioned a permanent susceptibility to religious emotion, we maintain that it was his subsequent conversion which gave that susceptibility its only value. His mental sufferings were accurate corollaries from his faith; and his mind was too clear-sighted, too sincere, too literal, too little imaginative, speedily to have effected an escape from them which nothing but self-deception and enthusiasm could have accomplished. And where, we would ask, is the efficacy of religious emotion so miserably perverted? Neither inspiring holiness, nor infusing peace, its influence on the active powers is purely paralytic, and on the passive, torture. There is no charm in devotional anguish,

Digitized by Google

more than in any other, which should make it a thing to be desired; and self-persecution without reformation, — tears wrung, not from the conscience, but from the creed, — are only new items in the account of human misery. It was not, then, till the reverential feelings towards the object of faith which those struggles implied were transplanted into a brighter system, — not till they took their place in a religion of duty instead of dogma, — not till they changed their character from tormentors to motives, from abjectness to love, — that they brought with them any blessing to the mind. Calvinism, like the magicians of Egypt, could poison and taint the salubrious stream; true religion, like the prophet's rod, could alone convert the current of blood into the waters of fertility.

The next important circumstance of his life was his conversion; an event which, from its permanent influence on his external relations and his internal habits, forms the most momentous change in his personal history; and, from its vast and still increasing effect on the state of opinion in this country, marks an era in the annals of our national Christianity. It was brought about by the same qualities of mind which had sunk him in the agonizing humiliation of orthodoxy, — we mean his plain-dealing with himself. It is not to the presumptuous, but to the humble, not to the self-ignorant, but to the clear-minded, student of their own nature, that the shade of Calvinism, like that of the fabled Upas-tree, proves itself, instead of a sheltering influence, a sickening and a deadly blight. Had Dr. Priestley

Digitized by Google

exercised more self-adulation and less perspicacity in his dealings with his own mind, he might have emerged from his gloomy terrors, into the comfortable persuasion of his own saintship; but the same sincerity which prevented his confounding the operations of his own thoughts with the agency of the Holy Spirit prevented him also from mistaking the prepossessions of education for the fulness of evidence. There never was a movement of opinion more purely characteristic than that of Dr. Priestley. It was performed exclusively by the natural gravitation of his own faculties, with the least possible share of impulse from external causes. It was his "call"; and we wish that every call which orthodoxy records were as simply a transaction between God and the believer's own mind; it was his "new creation," the brooding of God's spirit, i. e. his own thought and conscience, over the chaos of a rude creed, and bidding light to struggle through the mass, and the elements to fall into a fairer order. That the change was progressive, extending over sixteen years, not only assimilates it to all that is good in God's providence, but indicates its independent character. The opinions which he ultimately embraced were nowhere embodied as a whole at the commencement of his inquiries; some of them were not in existence, and the rest were barely accessible, scattered through many dissimilar writers, — rather hinted than stated; and, if deemed worthy of mention for their curiosity, requiring apology for their profaneness.

The collective adoption of the peculiarities con-

Digitized by Google

stituting modern English Unitarianism would then have been unnatural, and their adoption from the dictation of others' minds impossible. Throughout the whole process of theological change which Dr. Priestley's opinions underwent, his transition from low Arianism to Humanitarianism, which was the last important step, is the only one in which the reasonings of a predecessor exerted a perceptible influence; and this was occasioned by the writings of Dr. Lardner, to be persuaded by whom must be a pure concession to evidence. Throughout every other stage of his conversion, Dr. Priestley was his own commentator; his inquiries followed the order of his own doubts; his evidence was collected and arranged by his own assiduity; and his conclusions drawn by the absolutely solitary exercise of his own intellect.

He has been accused, and by an authority which gives weight to the accusation, of having imbibed from his age a spirit of innovation. We apprehend that the charge involves a material error with regard both to his character and his times. A more stationary condition of the social mind than that in which his opinions commenced, matured, and almost completed their progress, could not perhaps be selected from the last two centuries of English history. The underworkings of the earthquake had doubtless commenced in France; the interior power which was to burst through the crust of institutions, and rock the nations in alarm, was "getting up its steam": but of this not the most penetrating had a glimpse; all was quiet on the surface, not a growl

Digitized by Google

was heard, not a vibration felt. Had it even been otherwise, Dr. Priestley could have been little affected, in the early part of his life, by the political occurrences of the Continent, for he was not then in a position either to receive or to impart the influence supposed; he was not then the admired philosopher, the conspicuous sectary, the obnoxious subject,—but the poor, secluded, unpopular preacher of a small market-town. The relative chronology of his opinions is curious. Not only were his changes of mind in complete anticipation of the stimulating period which closed the last century, but some of his most startling sentiments were the earliest embraced; he had maintained the inconclusiveness of St. Paul's reasoning, gone all lengths with the doctrine of necessity, and rejected his belief in divine influence, before he had been in the ministry three years. And on the other hand, when the time of restless theory came, and all old opinions were loosened, and the whole creed of society, political, social, and religious, was broken up for reconstruction, his convictions had been made up; he had not to take up his opinions amid the maddening excitement which, in the eagerness to enthrone reason, thrust her from her seat; calmer moments had been devoted to the task, and in the retrospect of his own mind he saw an epitome of the mental revolution whose rapid transitions were hurrying by. Hence the steady posture which he assumed amid all the revelry of speculation which he witnessed; hence, with all his exultation in the new prospect which seemed to open upon society, he appeared as a conservator, no

Digitized by Google

less frequently than as an assailant, of existing opinions. It would indeed be difficult to select from the benefactors of mankind one who was less acted upon by his age, whose convictions were more entirely independent of sympathy; in the whole circle of whose opinions you can set down so little to the prejudgments of education, to the attractions of friendship, to the perverse love of opposition, to the contagion of prevailing taste, or to any of the irregular moral causes which, independently of evidence, determine the course of human belief. We do not assert that he was not precipitate; we do not say that he cast away no gems of truth in clearing from the sanctuary the dust of ages; we do not deny that, in his passion for simplification, he did sometimes run too rapidly through a mystery, and propound inconsiderate explanations of things deeper than his philosophy. But we maintain that his sources of fallacy, whatever they were, were from within, and not from without; that he was no man for the second-hand errors of indolent or imitative intellects; that his faults were all those of a searching, copious, and original mind.

We have said that Dr. Priestley's theological inquiries followed the order of his doubts: his conversion followed the order of his inquiries, his publications the order of his conversion, and his influence the order of his publications. Hence in part has arisen among Unitarians a conventional arrangement of their theological peculiarities, always beginning with the question respecting the person of Christ, and ending with Universal Restoration. Every com-

Digitized by Google

plete published defence of their tenets, and almost every systematic course of public lectures in their chapels, exhibits this particular sequence of faith. It was not unnatural that the order of investigation should become, in Dr. Priestley's mind, the order of importance: in each succeeding inquiry he would use, in addition to its independent evidence, the conclusion established in the preceding; and, at the end of the process, the first step would seem to be more purely and directly drawn from Scripture, and the next to be of a more inferential character. The order of discovery, however, is seldom the best order of proof; nor is either the best order for popular exposition; and we think it, on some accounts, unfortunate that Unitarianism has disposed itself so inflexibly along the graduated scale marked out by the steps of its modern explorers. Whether we regard it as the negation of orthodoxy, or contemplate it as a set of positive and harmonious truths, this restriction is unnecessary. The ingenious construction of the popular system, which indissolubly cements together its several dogmas, has its perils as well as its advantages. If any one of its tenets, on finding entrance into the mind, introduces its companions in its train, any one of them, on its departure, opens an exit for all the rest. It matters little, then, where you begin the assault; the battery of your logic is circular, and, commence the fire where you may, will sweep the field. Or take the more interesting view of Unitarian Christianity, as a cluster of positive doctrines, and the same remark holds good. With far less of the artificial ingenuity of system

Digitized by Google

than the prevalent theology, it has still the natural harmony of truth; and the affinities which blend together its parts are so close, as to spread a chain of delicate yet unbroken influence through the whole; and communicate the first spark of thought where you will, it will shoot from link to link to the farthest extremity. Unitarianism, we think, must discover more variety in its resources, must avail itself of more flexibility of appeal, must wield in turn its critical, its philosophical, its social, its poetical, its devotional powers, before it gain its destined ascendency over the mind of Christendom. With great respect for the able contributions which Christian truth has received from its departed champions, we still must regard them as *only* contributions; and think that the controversy must be again and again rewritten, and its whole form recast, before it may begin to number its triumphs.

Though no external influences could produce that extraordinary versatility which characterized Dr. Priestley, the circumstances in his history which tended to encourage it are not unworthy of a passing notice. During the lapse of seven years from the termination of his college life, he found himself in three different situations, each presenting strong, and almost exclusive, motives to a separate class of pursuits. First came a ministry of three years in a small country town, affording no occasions of active duty, and no distractions of society. Compelled to live on thirty pounds a year, watched, suspected, and partially deserted, by a congregation whose piety vented itself in dread of heterodoxy, and finding

Digitized by Google

little congenial sentiment among his neighboring brethren, he devoted himself entirely to theological study, for which alone his library afforded him scope. Next he was a schoolmaster at Nantwich, under the same inability which every conscientious schoolmaster feels, to attend to any thing beyond the duties of his office; and accordingly we here find him studying grammar and language. Thence he removed to Warrington, and there gave himself up with astonishing energy to the preparation of lectures on the theory of language, on oratory and the belles lettres, on history and general policy; — a class of topics almost entirely new to him, and for excellence in which there was little provision in the predominant qualities of his mind. Yet what he wanted of the critic's delicate perception he compensated by the philosopher's comprehensive views; and though his labors in these departments may not be destined to live, there is in his treatment of his subjects a breadth and magnitude and metaphysical spirit, which contrasts favorably with the small and superficial criticism of his predecessors in the same field. In his conception of his object he is as much their superior, as he is inferior to the noble school of German critics, whose genius has, in our own day, penetrated the mysteries, and analyzed the spirit, of poetry and the arts.

Before he quitted his office of tutor, and after he had completed the composition of his lectures, an introduction to Dr. Price and Dr. Franklin gave the first impulse to his philosophical pursuits. Whether this event be estimated by its effect on his fame or

Digitized by Google

that upon his character, it must be regarded as among the most important in his life. The unparalleled ardor with which he prosecuted his newly acquired objects, and the signal success by which it was at once recompensed and stimulated, soon rendered it manifest that his intellect had found its appropriate direction; and from this time, until his career was checked by persecution, he continued to give to the world a series of discoveries, capable of comparison, in their variety and productiveness, with the achievements of the most honored names in the records of physical science. Of the qualities of mind which he brought to the study of Nature and her laws, it will be our business to speak hereafter: we notice his philosophical pursuits here, merely as they relate to the history of his character. Great as their influence upon him was, they wrought no revolution, no change, in his habits and feelings. All that he had been he continued to be; all that he had done he continued to do. Their operation was one of pure addition. They extended his reverential gaze on creation over a wider field; they quickened his marvellous activity; they expanded his benevolence; they deepened his piety; they illustrated his own principle, that every intellectual and moral attainment sheds illumination on every other, and that mental power multiplies itself indefinitely: and they completed that rare combination of qualities by which, in an age of infidelity and of arbitrary power, science, liberty, and religion all found in him a fitting representative.

Thus much we have said respecting the circum-

Digitized by Google

stances which were most deeply concerned in determining the career of this eminent philosopher and divine. Our readers may wonder that we have omitted to notice the two most remarkable events of his history, — his persecution at Birmingham and his retreat to America. The truth is, that the most romantic passages of human life are not always the most influential: our object has been, not to furnish an interesting narrative, but to sketch the records of a mind; and we think that the occurrences just mentioned, taking place as they did, in the maturity of Dr. Priestley's mind, were means rather of indicating and developing than of forming his character. They will find, therefore, a more appropriate place in the analysis which we propose to attempt of that character in its intellectual, moral, and religious relations.

If any one were to put forth the prospectus of a Cyclopædia, proposing to write all the articles himself, he would be set down for a genius or a madman. His admirers would think him the wonder of the world; his opponents would cry out upon him as a shallow pretender. To the discerning, the conception of such a design would disclose the true character of his mind. To imagine the outline, and glance even rapidly from the Alpha to the Omega of human attainments, implies no ordinary power; to look over the wide continent of knowledge, and see it mapped out in all its bearings, and trace the great skeleton truths which form its mountain barriers, and follow the streams of beauty that wind below their base, is the prerogative of none but the com-

Digitized by Google

prehensive and far-sighted mind. But to suppose that the same intellect which sketches the outline can fill up the details, that he who understands the mutual relations of the different departments of science and art can unfold all their mysteries, betrays a miscalculation of the voluminous contents of human knowledge, and an ignorance of the varieties of intellectual power requisite to embrace them all. To refer to a catalogue of Dr. Priestley's works is like consulting a prospectus of a Cyclopædia; and it is impossible to remember that they are all the productions of one individual, without the impression that his mind was more adventurous than profound, and its vision more telescopic than microscopic. How far this impression is just we may attempt to ascertain. We believe it to be the truth, but not the whole truth.

There can be no doubt that versatility was the great characteristic of Dr. Priestley's genius. Singularly quick of apprehension, he made all his acquisitions with facility and rapidity; and hence he derived a confidence in the working-power of his own mind, and a general faith in the sufficiency of the human faculties as instruments of knowledge, which led him on to achievement after achievement in the true spirit of intellectual enterprise. This excursiveness of mind was encouraged by his metaphysical creed. It has been the prevailing error of the Hartleian school, that they have made too light of the original differences of mental capability, conscious, perhaps, that their philosophy has hitherto failed to explain them: and the natural consequence

Digitized by Google

of incredulity respecting the existence of peculiar genius is to give increased reliance on the efficacy of self-discipline, to lessen the motive to a division of intellectual labor, and make the mind a servant of all work. We are aware, however, that no speculative tenet is enough to account for the mental peculiarities of the individual who holds it; for the adoption of the tenet is itself a mental phenomenon, requiring to be explained, and frequently arising from that very constitution of mind which is supposed to be its effect. That Dr. Priestley thought little of the exclusive fitness of peculiar understandings for peculiar pursuits, is to be ascribed to the absence of any exclusive tendency in himself; that he was disposed to try every thing, arose from his having failed in nothing; the consciousness of power must precede the belief in power; and the philosophy of the sentiment, *Possunt, qui posse videntur*, is incomplete till the converse is added, *Qui possunt, posse videntur.*

Dr. Priestley's extraordinary versatility, then, while it was confirmed by his intellectual philosophy, is to be traced to his possession of original endowments, bearing an equal relation to many departments of knowledge. In theology, in mental and moral science, and, above all, in experimental chemistry, his rapidity and copiousness of association, his prompt perception of analogies, his faith in the consistency of creation's laws, and his consequent passion for simplicity, were all available as means of detecting error, and aids in the discovery of truth. And the excellence which these qualities enabled him to attain in his several pursuits was of the same

Digitized by Google

kind in all. In none did they confer on him superlative merit; in some, at least, they led him into great faults: but in every one they fitted him to be the able and dauntless explorer, powerful to penetrate the *terra incognita* of mystery, and quick to return enriched with the spoils of fresh thought. Year after year he visited the temple of truth, and hung upon its walls some new exuviæ: and who can wonder that his offerings in their abundance were more miscellaneous than rare; that they consisted not always of the gold and the silver which could be for ever deposited in the sacred treasury, but sometimes of the scattered arms and fragments of wreck which were of little worth but as trophies of victory? He was the ample collector of materials for discovery, rather than the final discoverer himself; a sign of approaching order, rather than the producer of order himself. We remember an amusing German play, designed as a satire upon the philosophy of atheism, in which Adam walks across the stage, *going* to be created: and, though a paradox, it may be said that truth, as it passed through Dr. Priestley's mind, was going to be created: the requisite elements were there; the vital principle was stirring amid them, and producing the incipient types of structures that were yet to be; but there was much that was unfit to undergo organization, much that could never be transmuted into forms of beauty, or filled with the inspiration of life; and there must be other processes, before the mass emerges a graceful and a breathing frame.

The characteristic qualities of Dr. Priestley's un-

Digitized by Google

derstanding led him to prosecute, with the greatest ardor, those subjects of inquiry in which but little progress had been made. The earlier and less exact stage of a science, which promises a great affluence of new phenomena, and admits of only the lower degree of generalization, and prepares the approach to the establishment of merely empirical laws, was that to which his powers were adapted. At a more advanced period of its history, when the field of observation is narrowed, and the demand for precise deduction increased, and where no appeal to fact can be of use, unless of the most refined and delicate kind, his faculties could have found no appropriate employment. In the age of Galileo he would probably have gained a reputation for discoveries in optics or astronomy: in our days he might have aided the progress of geology: but in his own generation the former had passed, while the latter had not reached the point at which alone he was able to apply an effective stimulus. It may be doubted whether, if he were living now, he would not find chemistry in advance of his peculiar genius; whether its greatest discovery, the law of definite proportions, which has eminently enhanced the dignity, by increasing the precision of the science, would not appear to have spoiled it for his hand: and were a question to arise, what branch of it would retain the greatest attractions for a mind like his, no one could hesitate to answer, electro-chemistry, in which there is mystery enough still to stimulate an ardor like his, and glimpses enough of wonderful and extensive laws to inspire the investigator with the

Digitized by Google

perpetual feeling that he is on the eve of great discoveries. Could we have been permitted to select a period in the history of science with whose spirit his mind was most congenial, we should have set him down among the contemporaries or immediate followers of Bacon; when, to a new and intelligent system of inquiry, Nature began to whisper her mighty secrets; when every penetrative mind that understood their value rushed to her shrine and listened reverentially to the great oracle; when the rapidity of discovery, following close on a dreary track of centuries barren of philosophy, gratified the love both of the wonderful and of the true; and when the passionate relish for fresh knowledge prevented the observance of definitive boundaries between its different regions, and tempted the inquirer to a wide and adventurous range. Dr. Priestley has recorded of himself, that he exercised without difficulty the power of exclusive attention to any object of study; but it would be a great error to suppose, that this mental habit in him was the same with that profound and steady abstraction which characterized the intellect of Newton, and amid whose stillness he slowly paced the upward steps of induction to the sublimest law of the material creation. Dr. Priestley's attention was eager rather than patient, active rather than laborious; suited to subjects whose relations are various and simple, rather than few and intricate; inclined to traverse kindred provinces of thought in quest of illustration, more than to remain immovable in the construction of a proof. His mind would become restive, if it had not scope.

Digitized by Google

It was incapable of proceeding long in the linear track of mathematical logic. The illumination of his genius was rather diffusive than concentrated. He could never have singled out any one phenomenon, and planted it in an intense focus of intellectual light, till he had fused it into its elements, and could exhibit its minutest component in distinct separation from the rest. The kind of accurate observation and cautious analysis and finished induction which Dr. Bradley manifested in his discovery of the aberration of light, and which at once detected, measured, and explained, by reference to a new cause, one of the minutest phenomena of the heavens, must be sought in a different order of intellect from Dr. Priestley's.

During the origin of a science, when the object is to accumulate facts and arrange them according to their more obvious affinities, the quality most needed by the philosopher is the quick perception of analogies which we have ascribed to Dr. Priestley. During its higher progress, when the object is to include large classes of facts under some general theory, or to measure the precise amount of causes already discovered, the quality most needed is a searching, discriminative power; a quality most rarely united with the former, and certainly not distinguishing the philosopher of whom we speak. Had he possessed it, few names greater than his would have appeared in the world's roll of honor. Because he wanted it, many of his philosophical works will have to be rewritten. *Non omnis morietur;* but while his opinions will live, his own exposition of them will hardly

Digitized by Google

satisfy the wants of a future age. That Dr. Hartley, at a time when no very precise limits had been drawn between physical and metaphysical science, should have entwined together a great truth in the philosophy of mind with a gratuitous speculation in the physiology of brain, is not surprising: that Dr. Priestley should have perceived that the doctrine of association was a fact, and the doctrine of vibrations a fancy, and have disentangled them from each other, is no more than might have been expected of his discernment: but that he should have separated them merely on the ground of their different evidence, without discovering their different provinces; that, in his character of metaphysician, he should still have manifested a hankering after the very theory of which he had disencumbered his great master's philosophy; that he should have been misled by the plausible analogy which promises to explain the phenomena of mind by the changes of matter, — indicates a want of clear perception with respect to the due limits of mental science which should have been reserved as the exclusive glory of the phrenologists. Dr. Priestley evidently thought, that, if there were but proof of the doctrine of vibrations, it might be duly expounded from the chair of moral philosophy; and had no idea that the professor who should do so would deserve a caning for his impertinence from his brother of the physiological school. Nor is this the only instance which marks his deficiency of acute discriminative power. The true test of this rarest and highest of human faculties is to be found in the researches of mental sci-

Digitized by Google

ence; its most refined exercise is required, and its greatest triumphs are achieved, in unravelling the subtile processes of reason, in penetrating the moving throng of thoughts and feelings, and, through all their magic changes, distinguishing the separate character and origin of each; and clear as a lens must that mind be, which, in transmitting through it the white light of intellect, can faithfully decompose it into its elemental colors. Dr. Priestley had far too much perspicacity not to perceive that mental analysis might be pushed much further, and, if intellectual science is to rank with other sciences, must be pushed much further, than it had been carried by the orthodox philosophers of Scotland. But we cannot think him happy in the specimens of analysis which he has left; often ingenious, they are seldom complete; they amount only to approximate solutions of the problem which he was encountering; they frequently furnish valuable hints to the future inquirer, and set him in the right track; but in his eagerness to reach the object of his search, Dr. Priestley overleaps many needful steps of the process, or breaks off in the midst, and deems the task accomplished which a more careful thinker would feel to be only commenced. This disposition to post through a difficulty, and see nothing in it, is especially apparent, we think, in his account of the idea of power, and in his attempt to explain the phenomena of memory; and throughout his works it would be in vain to look for any thing like the analytical ingenuity of which later writers belonging to the same school, especially Brown and Mill, afford

Digitized by Google

such elaborate, though unsatisfactory display. His merits in the department of mental science consist less in the success with which he attacked its difficulties, than the skill with which he multiplied its applications; less in the light which he introduced into its interior recesses, than in the range of kindred subjects over which he spread its illumination. In his mind morals, history, religion, appeared tinged with it, and thence adorned with greater dignity. Instances of this are to be found in his "History of Early Opinions," his sermons "On Habitual Devotion," "On Habit," "On the Duty of not Living to Ourselves," and above all, in his "Analogy of the Divine Dispensations"; an essay which may be regarded as perhaps the happiest effort of his mind, involving precisely that brief and simple exposition of a metaphysical principle with copiousness and magnitude of application, to which his powers were peculiarly adapted. There is, too, a solemnity in it, arising from the congeniality of its train of thought with all his faculties of intellect and soul, which is rarely perceptible in his writings. It is philosophy kindling itself into worship.

Dr. Priestley's rank as a linguist and a critic may be inferred from the qualities which we have already ascribed or denied to him. The same fertility of association and love of analogy which facilitated to him the acquisition of a foreign language up to a certain point, rendered his complete mastery of it almost impossible. He wanted the imperturbable patience, the nice eye for minute differences, the unwearied faith in the importance of an apparent

Digitized by Google

trifle, which are requisite to the character of the accomplished philologist. His knowledge of the laws of thought rendered him a perspicuous interpreter of the theory of language; and, if the subject had been strongly urged upon his attention, would perhaps have made him a successful student of philosophical etymology, would have enabled him to detect the relations which group together in a few great families the whole population of words in the same language, and, having thus laid bare its primeval state, to trace the successive steps of association by which it has multiplied its resources, and refined its susceptibilities with the increasing wants and more delicate perceptions of the minds whose instruments it has been. There was nothing, at least, to prevent his delineation of the outline of such a history; the details must have partaken of the defects already noticed in his mental analyses. Be this as it may, however, the attempt was never made. Nothing could ever have made him forget that language is only the vehicle of ideas, and the study of it, therefore, only a means to an end; and we suspect that few who are habitually impressed with this undeniable truth will become men of erudition. We do not question the importance of minute criticism; we admit that without it the *whole* meaning of an author cannot be developed, and that the lights and shades of expression which it brings out are really lights and shades of thought, constituting an essential element in the graces of a foreign literature. But most readers are utilitarians; of the amount of meaning which they lose by an

Digitized by Google

accuracy not absolutely finished they are necessarily unconscious, the quantity which they gain will seem enough for their purpose; and, unless they possess a sensitiveness of taste seldom to be found, and read in order to gratify their perception of the beautiful, they will feel little inducement to brace themselves to the long, barren toils of the professed linguist. It may be doubted, however, whether Dr. Priestley renounced the needful labor upon any such deliberate calculation, and whether he did not greatly underrate the attainments requisite for a philologist. At least, we cannot but think that many of our grave professors, who can lecture an hour upon a word, would smile at his characteristic project of translating the whole Hebrew Scriptures himself, during the intervals of other occupations, in three or four years.

Dr. Priestley has repeatedly recorded of himself a remarkable deficiency of memory; a want to be regretted less on its own account than because, in conjunction with another cause, it involved a mental failure of a more serious kind, — a weakness of conception. By conception we mean the power of bringing vividly before the thoughts, in combination, the parts of any object or any scene which has been presented to the senses or the mind. It is emphatically the pictorial faculty needed by the illustrating artist, when, having gathered from Milton or from Byron the elements of his design, he brings them harmoniously together, and groups his figures, and makes his perspective, and disposes his lights; needed by the historian, when, having learned the

Digitized by Google

catalogue of a great man's deeds, he blends these fragments into an image of his mind; or, having collected the dispersed events of a period, he disposes them in due relation before his view, so as to become familiar with the spirit of the time; needed equally by the theologian, that he may live in thought through the sacred days of old, and become pilgrim in heart to the Holy Land; that he may not only know how many stamens there are in the lilies of the field, and how many feet in the cedar's height, but see how they grace the plains of Jericho, or wave upon the top of Lebanon; not only count the steps of the temple and tell the manufacture of the priest's robe, but gaze on the majestic pile from the Mount of Olives, or stand in the resplendence of its golden gate, and hear the murmur of the prayers, and watch the incense curling to the skies; not merely discourse on the properties of hyssop, and conjecture of what timber the cross was made, but mingle with the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, and raise a reverential eye towards the crucified, and listen to that fainting cry of filial tenderness. Now, both in his histories and in his theology, Dr. Priestley's deficiency of conception is much felt. In the former there is not, as far as we remember, a single delineation of character, a scene or a cluster of incidents *as a whole*, and consequently not any picture that leaves a strong impression upon the reader's mind: they are accounts, not of persons but of actions, not of eras but of events: the trains of contemporary occurrences in different localities are placed before us like a number of parallel lines, with no attempt

Digitized by Google

to twine them together; and each course of successive events like so many points, not melted into a continuous line. The nature of ecclesiastical history itself offers, it is true, a great obstacle to the preservation of unity; it is in its very essence a dislocation; a number of events which form no proper class in themselves; a part arbitrarily cut out from the whole, comprising effects removed from their causes, and causes left alone by their effects: and, independently of this difficulty, the materials of ecclesiastical history are unpromising enough. Yet there are portions containing elements for strong impression; there are persecutions, and councils, and crusades; there are the broad contrasts of an idolatrous civilization and a barbarous Christianity, of the genius of Rome and the spirit of Christ, of the religion of the East and the philosophy of the West; there are matchless heroes of conscience in the Alpine fastnesses, and intrepid reformers in the cities of Germany: and there is no reason why the power of these passages should be abandoned to the province of fiction. The want of picturesque effect in Dr. Priestley's narratives involves in a great degree a loss of moral effect; by giving a ground plan of a persecution, and an enumeration of all the horrors it contained, he produces rather a disgust at the butchery than enthusiasm at the magnanimity with which it is said to have been met. The merit of his histories is to be sought, not in their narrative of incidents, but in their exposition of opinions; not in the facts, but in the inferences; not in the delineation which shows what society was, but in the philosophy which proves what it must have been.

Digitized by Google

That the deficiency of which we speak must diminish the interest of his theological writings, that it must unfavorably influence their manner, will be readily admitted by all; but it may not be at once obvious how it could affect their matter, and lessen their intrinsic soundness and truth. It is, however, evident that, *cæteris paribus*, in proportion as an interpreter of ancient writings can place himself in sympathy with his author, can plant himself by his side and look round on his position, can even take occupancy of his very mind, and discover how all things are tinged by the hues of his peculiar intellect and feelings, the chances are multiplied that the interpretation will be correct. Indeed, it is merely as aids to this transmutation of mind on the part of the student that the labors of the Scripture naturalist, the traveller, and the archæologist are valuable. Now Dr. Priestley appears to us to have been incapable of thus laying down his own personality: at the foot of Sinai, among the captives of Babylon, in audience of the minstrelsy of Israel, on the pavement of the temple, in the hired house of Paul, or with the exile in Patmos, he is the good, plain, speculative Dr. Priestley still. He moves like a foreigner through all the scenes which he visits, too restless to take up his abode in them, and grow warm beneath their suns, and find a home among their people, and learn the spirit of their joys and sorrows, and be ranked as one who "loveth their nation." Accordingly, his theology is too much an Occidental system transplanted into the East; he sees vastly too much philosophy, and vastly too little poetry, in the Scrip-

Digitized by Google

tures. He shows too much disposition to change their beautiful histories into imperfect ethics; and perhaps, by missing the object which the writers had in view, estimates their logic with real injustice. Whether illustrations of these peculiarities may not be found in his extensive use of the Gnostic philosophy as a key to the writings of the Apostle John, in his interpretations of the Jewish prophecies, in his anticipations with respect to the mode of transition from this life to another, and in his appreciation of the letters of Paul, we leave to be decided in the court of enlightened Biblical criticism. Let not our admissions with respect to Dr. Priestley's theology be unfairly used. A name like his is indeed in little danger from such concessions. Let it be remembered that they leave unimpeached the correctness of the processes by which he proved and proved again the great truths which form the definition of Unitarian Christianity; and until the time shall come (and it will not be soon) when the absolute unity of God, the universality and paternity of his government, and the simple humanity of Christ, shall need no more defence, recourse will be had to the store-house of perspicuous proof which his works contain.

Who can draw for us truly the boundary between the intellectual and the active part of human nature? The faculties into which wise men distribute the mind, like the hemispheres into which geographers divide the earth, though definable enough in theory, are hard to discriminate in practice. Nothing clearer than the equator upon a paper globe; and in our

Digitized by Google

paper metaphysics, nothing is easier of discovery than that Chapter VI. treats of one faculty, and Chapter VII. of another; but Nature is far from being so obligingly distinct. We remember the days when, in our childish conceptions of crossing the line, a piece of graduated cord, belting the earth, was discernible; and philosophy has perhaps been chargeable with a similar puerility of expectation in its progress from the mental to the moral regions of the mind. They blend indistinguishably, and reciprocate their energies, like the waters of the Northern and the Southern seas, whose currents flow and whose billows roll together, irrespective of the artificial limits of science. In the spiritual, however, as in the material world, Nature gives notice of our approach to her impalpable boundaries: she has her realms of transition: the traveller, nearing the earth's other half, finds a more copious vegetation, and warmer suns, and loftier skies, and bluer hills: and the explorer of the soul, passing from the intellect to the morality of man, will find an intermediate region, adorned with a more exuberant foliage of thought, invested with a more glowing atmosphere of emotion. It is in no trifling sense that the poetical faculty, the perception and the love of beauty, whether physical or moral, may be said to lie between the thinking and the motive departments of the mind: it cannot be identified with either, yet it pervades both: it belongs exclusively to neither, yet sheds an influence on both, kindling with new tints both truth and goodness: like the constellations of the equatorial heavens, it has its stars in both hemi-

Digitized by Google

spheres, and cannot be cut off from either without extinguishing some of its essential lights.

But perhaps we are making a longer pilgrimage than was needful from Dr. Priestley's intellectual to his moral character; for in fact very little lay between. With him duty was a portion of truth, a series of inferences from his philosophy; clear and strong conviction, rather than warm affection, characterized his notions of right. Never was there a mind over which moral principle exercised a more paramount sway; but his was no blind and superstitious obedience: with him conscience could not be moved without being convinced; but only show him on evidence the reasonableness of any habit or train of feelings, and he would set himself to its cultivation without further demur; he would no more have thought of not doing what was right, than of not believing what was true. No one can be surprised that Dr. Priestley repudiated as an absurdity the doctrine of an instinctive moral sense; for he was singularly free from those mental qualities which lead to this belief. It is the natural creed of those whose intellects are slow in comparison with the quickness of their feelings, whose moral judgment possesses a speed too fast for their mental eye to trace, flashing on them with such velocity and intensity that, like the lightning, they seem to dart from heaven to earth, without traversing the space between. Dr. Priestley's mind was the reverse of this; his emotions were never so intense as to suspend his observing faculty; and his intellect was rapid enough to keep pace with them and mark their

Digitized by Google

apparent course. His sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation sufficiently resembled the processes of assent and dissent to send him in quest of a common origin for both in the association of ideas.

It is instructive to compare the corresponding parts of such different characters as Mrs. Barbauld's and Dr. Priestley's; and in the essay on devotional taste by the former, contrasted with the strictures on it by the latter, we have a picture of the piety of the exclusively poetical, placed side by side with that of the exclusively philosophical. Every religious mind feels its religion to be the loftiest object of its regard, to lie at the very summit of its powers; and in the effort to reach the infinite and eternal, in yearning to shadow forth the idea of unlimited perfection, naturally seeks for its faith an alliance with all that appears most interesting and glorious. Mrs. Barbauld's passion was for the beautiful and the sublime; and to her, devotion was poetry, akin to the aspirations of genius: Dr. Priestley knew nothing so noble as truth; and to him devotion was philosophy gazing calmly at the only object above itself. Mrs. Barbauld saw in all creeds some elements of adoration for the heart, and dreaded lest controversy should brush off the emotions they awakened: Dr. Priestley saw in all creeds much error, and hoped that controversy would render them more quickening, by making them more pure. Mrs. Barbauld understood the natural language of art, felt the deep expressiveness of whatever is beautiful in form and sound, and would have given to piety the majesty of architecture, and the voice of

Digitized by Google

music: Dr. Priestley thought that the eye and the ear, with their physical gratifications, were only in the way in the work of realizing great general truth, and would have worshipped with the simplicity of a spirit in space. Mrs. Barbauld reverenced human affections, even in their illusions and extravagances; she saw in them the passion for excellence, and the propensity to believe in its reality; she had probably observed the important fact (so conspicuous in Doddridge), that the tempers which are most devotional are generally the most tender in their human relations; she could discover no specific difference between the emotions yielded to ideal excellence on earth, and invisible perfection in heaven; and she dared to find an analogy between piety and love: Dr. Priestley, little given to Platonisms of fancy, holding that all feeling should be proportioned to the real qualities of its object, and forgetting that it cannot overpass the gulf between the created and the Creator, and expand itself to literal infinitude, condemned the expression as false and profane. Perhaps each was right, except in condemning the notions of the other. Happily, religion has its affinities with the whole soul, and there is no faculty incapable of worship. One mind is affected by conceptions of immeasurable space and time, another by ideas of life and change: one prefers the blank, great truth, another the single and moving instance: one to go forth and seek the object of its adoration in fields beyond the solar light, another to bring his image home, and feel him in the closet or in the mind: one, when standing before the invisible, may love to look into

Digitized by Google

the deep background of infinity which lies behind created things; another, to gaze on the beautiful forms of reality, sketched on its dark surface, and take them as types of what lies in the depth. Why limit the modes of devotional conception? Why say to any emotions or any thoughts, "You shall not worship," to any desires, "You shall not pray"? There can be no proprieties here. Prayer is no more than the utterance, the irrepressible utterance, of the affections which most adorn and dignify human nature; it is the soul's act in laying itself consciously open at the feet of God; it is the gush of tenderness with which the spirit pours forth its burning emotions of veneration and love; it is the joy, or the agony, or the shame of placing the mind as it is, in contact with the great parent mind, that its sins may become clearer, its wants more craving, that its life may be quickened, and its sympathies refreshed. This is the end, this the temper of piety; every thing else is but its instrument; and that mode of thought and expression which is truest to each individual mind, must be that mind's best vehicle of devotion.

But however little of apparent glow there might be in Dr. Priestley's piety, it was, like every thing else in his nature, sincere and true; and it conducted him with a moral dignity, sometimes reaching the highest kind of greatness, through a life of no ordinary vicissitude. It is difficult, even at this distance of time, in the quiet of one's study, with abundant proofs that better times have set in, nay, in immediate view of ten Irish bishops and church-rates disappearing under the ministerial extinguisher, to read

Digitized by Google

the history of the Birmingham riots with due composure. And yet the great sufferer himself, the pastor driven from his flock, the author despoiled of his manuscripts, the toil of years, the philosopher almost within hearing of the crash of his apparatus, the philanthropist hunted for his noble sympathy with his race, the man robbed of his social rights, uplifts amid the violence a front of unbroken, yet not cold magnanimity. Indeed, it is this very calmness, so instantaneous, so unlabored, so utterly free from stoicism, far more than the mere exhibition of suffering, that is most affecting in this narrative. There is an evident simplicity and fidelity in his delineation of his own state of mind which inspires one with that most delightful feeling, — perfect faith in a fellow-being. There is no excitement; the deeps of his nature were stirred, but they were only freshened, not thrown into storm: there is no exaggeration, no consciousness of being an object of interest, no endurance for the sake of setting an example, no sectarian triumph secretly exclaiming, "See what my principles can do": the same sentiments of sublime necessarian piety, the same indignation quelled in the faith that present evil is the index that points to future good, the same compassion for those who wronged him, neither mawkish nor haughty, which appear in his replies to public addresses, appear also, and with just the same prominence, in his careless and familiar letters. It was obvious that in all times past he had been faithful to his scheme of Christian philosophy, and deeply imbedded in his mind and heart every principle which his judgment had led him

Digitized by Google

to advocate. And he lived to afford a long fulfilment to his own prediction of the efficacy of his faith. After lingering in England long enough to follow to the grave his tried friend, Dr. Price, to see other associates fast falling around him, to find himself shunned by the society which represented the science of his country, and whose records he had enriched by his discoveries, to be wearied by ceaseless calumnies in the senate and from the press, and feel that here was no home for himself or his children: on the confines of old age, he went forth to die in the land on whose promised destinies his eye, ever brightened by the hopes of humanity, had long been fixed; deeming it happier to live a stranger on the shores of liberty, than be dependent on the tender mercy of tyrants for a footing on his native soil. There, in one of its remoter recesses, on the outer margin of civilization, he, who had made a part of the world's briskest activity, who had led on the speed of its progress, whose mind had kept pace with its learning, and overtaken its science, and outstripped its freedom and its morality, gathered together his resources of philosophy and devotion; thence he looked forth on the vicissitudes and prospects of Europe, with melancholy but hopeful interest, like the prophet from his mount on the land whose glories he was not to see. But it was not for such an energetic spirit as his to pass instantaneously into the quietude of exile without an irrecoverable shock. He had not that dreamy and idle pietism which could enwrap itself in the mists of its own contemplations, and believe heaven nearer in proportion as earth became

Digitized by Google

less distinct. The shifting sights and busy murmurs that reached him from afar, reminded him of the circulation of social toils which had plied his hand and heart. Year after year passed on, and brought him no summons of duty back into the stir of men: all that he did he had to devise and execute by his own solitary energies, apart from advice and sympathy, and with no hope but that of benefiting the world he was soon to quit. The effort to exchange the habits of the city for those of the cloister was astonishingly successful. But his mind was never the same again; it is impossible not to perceive a decline of power, a tendency to garrulity of style and eccentricity of speculation in his American publications. And yet, while this slight though perceptible shade fell upon his intellect, a softened light seemed to spread itself over his character. His feelings, his moral perceptions, were mellowed and ripened by years, and assumed a tenderness and refinement not observable before. Thanks to the genial and heavenly clime which Christianity sheds around the soul, the aged stem burst into blossom. And so it will always be when the mind is pervaded by a faith as real as Priestley's. There is no law of nature, there are no frosts of time, to shed a snow-blight on the heart. The feelings die out, when their objects come to an end; and if there be no future, and the aims of life become shorter and shorter, and its treasures drop off, and its attractions are spent, and a few links only of its hours remain in the hand, well may there be no heart for effort and no eye for beauty, and well may love gather itself up to die. But open perfec-

Digitized by Google

tion to its veneration, and immortality to its step; tell it of one who is and will always be the inspirer of genius, the originator of truth, the life of emotion; assure it that all which is loved shall live for ever, that that which is known shall enlarge for ever, that all which is felt shall grow intenser for ever; — and the proximity to death will quicken instead of withering the mind; the eye will grow dim on the open page of knowledge; the hand will be found clasping in death the instruments of human good; the heart's last pulse will beat with some new emotion of benignity. In Priestley's case there was not merely a sustainment, but a positive advancement of character in later years. The symptoms of restlessness gradually disappear without abatement of his activity; a quietude as of one who waits and listens comes over him; there are touches of sentiment and traces of tears in his letters, and yet an obvious increase of serenity and hope; there is a disposition to devise and accomplish more good for the world, and ply himself while an energy remained, and yet no anxiety to do what was beyond his powers. He successively followed to the grave a son and a wife; and the more he was left alone, the more did he learn to love to be alone; and in his study, surrounded by the books which had been his companions through half a century and over half the earth, and sitting beneath the pictures of friends under the turf, he took his last survey of the world which had given him so long a shelter: like a grateful guest before his departure, he numbered up the bright and social or the adventurous hours which had passed during his stay;

Digitized by Google

and the philosophers who had welcomed him in his annual visits to London, the broad, sagacious face of Franklin, the benignant intelligence of Price, rose up before him, and the social voices of the group of heretics round the fireside of Essex Street floated on his ear; and, as the full moon shone upon his table, and glistened in his electrical machine, his eye would dream of the dining philosophers of the Lunar Society, and light up to greet again the doughty features of Darwin, and the clear, calculating eye of Watt. Yet his retrospective thoughts were but hints to suggest a train of prospective far more interesting. The scenes which he loved were in the past, but most of the objects that clothed them with associations of interest were already transferred to the future; there they were in reserve for him, to be recovered (to use his own favorite phrase, slightly tinged with the melancholy spirit of his solitude) "under more favorable circumstances"; and thither, with all his attachment to the world whose last cliffs he had reached, and whose boundary ocean already murmured beneath, he hoped soon to emigrate.

There are few dispositions of which society exhibits rarer practical traces than the love of truth. There is abundance of profession; but the more the profession, the less the reality. Where the feeling is genuine, truth is the mind's vernacular language; and to give grave notice of an intention to utter it would be as absurd as if an advocate, on rising, were to say to the jury, "Gentlemen, I most solemnly assure you, that in what I am about to lay

Digitized by Google

before you I mean to speak English." In proportion as faith in truth becomes more common, it will cease to be matter of pretension. Were we to designate Dr. Priestley in one word, that word would be "truth"; it would correctly describe the employment of his intellect, the essential feeling of his heart, the first axiom of his morality, and even the impression of his outward deportment. He had none of that reckless sportiveness which makes playthings of opinions, and, for an hour's amusement, looks in at them, and turns them about, like the beads of a kaleidoscope, watching what fantastical shapes they may be made to assume. He had no sympathy with the sceptical philosophy which sees nothing but error in all human speculation, nothing but "sick men's dreams" in the mutations of opinion. That there is such a thing as truth, that it is not placed beyond the reach of the human understanding, and that, when found, it is necessarily a pure good, were the first principles of his faith; principles which he did not promulgate in their general form, and then reject in their applications, but carried out boldly, and without reserve, into every topic which invited his research. So utterly untrue is it that he had a passion for unsettling convictions, and then leaving the mind in a state of fluctuation, that if he committed any marked fault in the conduct of investigation, it was this;—that he recognized no other posture of the understanding in reference to the subject of its inquiry than assent and dissent; that the intermediate state of doubt he disowned, except as a means of transition to one of the other

Digitized by Google

two; and overlooked the fact, that, as there may be questions in which the conflicting evidence is accurately balanced, there may be occasions on which, in the present condition of human knowledge, suspense is the appropriate feeling. His tendency was much more to dogmatize than to doubt; a dogmatism, however, which, if occasionally appearing after investigation, never manifested itself before. With this limitation, his impartiality was unimpeachable. That his inquiry must lead to the positive discovery of truth or falsehood was certainly a species of prejudgment; but it could not determine him unfairly towards either of two antagonist opinions; it could only preclude from the rejection of both. In his comparison of the opposing claims of evidence, his faith in truth never deserted him; altogether annihilating the influence of his previous impressions, and not even allowing them a presumption of innocence till proved to be guilty. His versatility of association rendered alterations of belief easier to him than to others: his feelings were not adhesive; they could without violence be transferred from one class of sentiments to another; and accordingly, even to the period of life when old impressions become indurated, and the emotions tardy of change, he was continually modifying his convictions, adopting new views with a facility truly wonderful, quickening them with life, and carrying them out to their remoter consequences with energy and fearlessness. His defence of the doctrine of phlogiston, when discarded by all other philosophers, is the solitary instance in his life of prejudiced tenacity of opinion;

Digitized by Google

and this was evinced in the decline of life, when even to him the difficulty must have been great of admitting a new theory, and applying it to the solution of facts which had been regarded as otherwise explained, and when, moreover, his attention had ceased to be actively directed to chemical inquiries. Any one who is aware how much the very memory of facts by the mind is dependent on the hypothesis which has been employed as the principle of their arrangement, or even as the guide to their discovery, will be disposed to treat this error rather as interesting to the mental philosopher, than as justifying the severity of the critic. The spirit of freedom and of faith which conducted him through his private inquiries, he carried out into his publication of their results. Ingenuous to himself, he was equally ingenuous to the world. He saw through the contemptible fallacies by which worldliness and imbecility would defend the suppression of opinions; ease, popularity, sectarian prosperity, he held to be bawbles compared with the duty of individual thought and speech, and sins if purchased at its expense. Not even could he think his task to society performed when he had stated and recommended the truths which he seemed to have reached: he lays before the world the whole process of his own mind; tells his difficulties, his failures, his false inferences, the hypotheses which misled as well as those which aided him; so that if his thoughts had fallen into type as they arose, they could scarcely have been more distinct. Hence he excelled much more in analytical than in synthetical composition, and seldom attempted the latter with-

Digitized by Google

out sliding continually into the former. And whatever may be thought of their relative merits, regarded as methods of direct instruction, it cannot be doubted that the successful investigator, who has the honesty to write analytically, bequeathes in this picture of his own intellect an invaluable guide to future inquirers in the same field, and a most interesting study to the observer of the human mind.

In nothing did Dr. Priestley's mental and moral freedom more nobly manifest itself than in his *well-proportioned* love of truth. With all his diversity of pursuit, he did not think all truth of equal importance, or deem the diffusion of useful knowledge an excuse for withholding the more useful. With all his ardor of mind, he did not look at an object till he saw nothing else, and it became his universe. He made his estimate deliberately; and he was not to be dazzled, or flattered, or laughed out of it. In his laboratory, he thought no better of chemistry than in his pulpit; and in the drawing-rooms of the French Academicians, no worse of Christianity than by the firesides of his own flock. He was never anxious to appear in either less or more than his real character. Even at the time when his name was most illustrious, and his associations the most close with the atheistical philosophers of the Continent; when he was courted by the revolutionists of England, when, by the persecution and desertion of all others, he was more especially thrown upon the sympathy of those men, and a noble and fascinating sympathy it was; when they urged him to quit the "unfruitful fields of polemical divinity, and cultivate

Digitized by Google

the philosophy of which he was the father," and promised him thus an eternal fame; — he assures them that he esteems his theology of far greater importance to mankind than his science, and risks his reputation at its height, by making it the vehicle to carry the great principles of religion before the almost inaccessible mind of the sceptics of France: perceiving the affinities and analogies which subsisted between the different departments of human knowledge, he did not desire to divorce them in his own mind, and derive a separate character from each. His philosophy is replete with faith, and his faith with philosophy; his conceptions of the Creator aid him in deciphering the creation; and every discovery in creation contributes a new element to his ideas of the Creator. The changes of the universe are the movements of God; and he that contemplates them without reference to the mind of which they are expressive, might as well study the laws of human action in the gestures of an automaton.

It is impossible to make human character a study without being tempted to speculate on the causes of the marvellous varieties which it exhibits. That those causes are not all external to the mind, scarcely admits of a doubt; and so difficult is it to define, or even to conjecture, those which are inherent in the mental constitution, that the philosophy of individual character can hardly be said to have any existence. Priestley was an adherent of that school by which all the phenomena of mind, whether intellectual or moral, were resolved into cases of the law of association; but why the law in question, operating on

Digitized by Google

the ideas furnished by sensation, should produce results so much more widely divergent from each other than are the external circumstances of mankind, is a problem very embarrassing to the resources of this doctrine. Perhaps more might be explained by original differences of sensibility than is commonly imagined. Were it true that the affections are the results of pleasurable and painful associations, that desire is simply the idea of a pleasure, and aversion the idea of a pain, it would follow that the vividness of the affections, the strength of the desires, and aversions must depend on the vividness of the primary sensation; in other words, that the warmth of the *moral* part of human nature must vary with the degree of original sensibility.

In this explanation, however, it is evident that no reason is involved, accounting for the relative prominence of the several moral faculties; it is only their *absolute* strength, the amount of fervor and enthusiasm, which would be explained. Possibly, however, the theory might be carried further, so as to provide an adequate cause for several *intellectual* peculiarities. The sensations supposed to form the elements of all knowledge are received either simultaneously or successively: when several are received simultaneously, as the smell, the taste, the color, the form, &c., of a fruit, their association together constitutes, according to this theory, our idea of an *object;* when received successively, their association makes up the idea of an *event.* Any thing, then, which should favor the associations of synchronous ideas, would

Digitized by Google

tend to produce a knowledge of objects, a perception of qualities; while any thing which should favor association in the successive order would tend to produce a knowledge of events, of the order of occurrences, and of the connection of cause and effect: in other words, in the one case a perceptive mind, with a discriminative feeling of the pleasurable and painful properties of things, a sense of the grand and the beautiful, would be the result; in the other, a mind attentive to the movements and phenomena, a ratiocinative and philosophic intellect. Now it is an acknowledged principle in the philosophy of suggestion, that all sensations experienced during the presence of any vivid impression become strongly associated with it, and with each other; and does it not follow, that the synchronous feelings of a sensitive constitution (i. e. the one which has vivid impressions) will be more intimately blended than in a differently formed mind? This suggestion involves an inference which might serve to verify or refute it; that where nature has endowed an individual with great original susceptibility, he will probably be distinguished by fondness for natural history, a relish for the beautiful and great, and moral enthusiasm; where there is but a mediocrity of sensibility, a love of science, of abstract truth, with a deficiency of taste and of fervor, is likely to be the result.

Might not many of Dr. Priestley's characteristics be traced, in consistency with his own philosophy, to such an original mediocrity of sensibility? — his want of memory, to a deficient vividness in the asso-

Digitized by Google

ciated ideas? — his versatility and rapidity of association, to the absence of any strong concentrative emotion tending to arrest his thoughts at any point in a train, and to forbid them to pass on? — the direction of his analogical power towards philosophical invention, rather than poetical imagination, to his want of perception of the beautiful? — his evenness of temper and spirits, to a freedom from that alternate action and reaction to which susceptible minds are liable? Perhaps even the inability which he mentions to do any thing when hurried, might admit of a similar explanation. For what is the feeling of hurry, but a belief that an unusual exercise of vigor, a great gathering of power, must be put in requisition, in order to accomplish some desired object? And one whose uniformity of temperament gives no experience of such occasional expansion of power has no faith in its possibility, or its effect: and hence he despairs, when the man of impulse becomes inspired. We throw out these brief hints with great diffidence, for the consideration of those who feel the defects, and would improve the resources, of the association-philosophy; they can be of no further use, than to suggest something better than themselves to more competent thinkers. Our main object in the remarks which have been made on Priestley has been, to revive the memory of a great man, at a period more favorable than any since his death to a just estimate of his character; to furnish a faithful delineation of his whole mind; to aid in determining his true position among the benefactors of mankind; and define his claims on the

Digitized by Google

veneration of his country. If we have in any degree succeeded in these objects, it will be no slight satisfaction to have performed some little part of the act of posthumous justice due from this generation.

Digitized by Google

THE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF THOMAS ARNOLD, D. D.*

[From the Prospective Review for February, 1845.]

In the preparation of these volumes Mr. Stanley had to perform a sad and solemn task. To present to the world the last glimpse of one who had been its benefactor, is at all times a melancholy office. But it is a bitter grief to do this for one whose past performance, admirable in itself, was less great than his future promise, and on whom men looked as yet with expectant, rather than with grateful eye. England was not prepared to lose Arnold; and finds it hard to accept his final image from his biographer, in place of much fruitful work from himself. Under the pressure of occupations that would exhaust the energy of ordinary men, he had not only meditated, but in part achieved, a system of designs by which the historical, philosophical, and Christian literature of his country would have been permanently enriched, and the spirit of its social life sensibly ele-

* The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D. D., late Head Master of Rugby School, and Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. By Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, M. A., Fellow and Tutor of University College, Oxford. In two Volumes. Fellowes. 1844.

Digitized by Google

vated. Just as he was raised into a position promising to render his industry and enthusiasm most rapidly productive, he has vanished from our hopes; and instead of those priceless stores of uncommunicated wisdom, the leaves casually scattered from his table are gathered together, and presented as his last memorial. In the midst of the third act the curtain has suddenly dropped; and rises only to show us the noble form, lately kindling with humane and earnest speech, now stretched in the silence of death.

Happily, however, it is only in the case of ordinary men that the value of a life can be measured by its *quantity*. The almost infinite worth to us of such a mind as Arnold's depends upon its *quality;* and if it only remains and toils in our midst long enough to show us the spirit and manner of its work, its highest function is performed. Let the deep game of life be played with a divine skill, and we must not complain though the calculable stake which is won in our behalf be only nominal. However great the loss of Arnold's Roman History, it is as nothing to the wealth he leaves us in this Biography. From what a good man *does* there is no higher lesson to be learned than what he *is;* his workmanship interests and profits us as an expression of himself, and would become dead and indifferent to us, if, instead of being a human creation, it were the product of some mechanical necessity. That Arnold has lived, and shown how much nobleness and strength may maintain itself in an age of falsehood, negligence, and pretence, — with this let us rest and be thankful.

Digitized by Google

The work before us is essentially an autobiography. The letters, which form its chief portion, extend from the year 1817 to 1842: and they present so vivid and complete an impression of the writer throughout the changes of his career, and the ripening of his character, that little occasion remained for their editor to appear as an original biographer. He has had the rare modesty and merit to perceive this; and in the chapters of his own, by which we are introduced to the several periods of the correspondence, every thing is kept in strict subordination to the legitimate purpose of the book: he evidently had no desire but to make us know the subject of his Memoirs; and the affectionate singleness of his aim was itself an adequate security for tact and success in its accomplishment. There are indeed traces of abstinence and self-restraint in the treatment of his materials, for which we honor him. Nothing would have been easier than to have created private heart-burnings and sectarian animosities by the indiscreet use of such letters as Arnold's; — letters full of reference to every controversy of the day, and passing the freest judgment on most of the conspicuous actors in Church or State. Mr. Stanley's good taste has conducted him wisely through a very delicate task. If we were disposed to find any fault with its execution, we should complain that he has not told us more of the personal habits and minuter traits which so materially help us to conceive the physiognomy of a character. The few things of this kind which he has given us constitute most delightful elements in our image of Arnold; — his sofa full

Digitized by Google

of books, his boyish play, his daily walk beside the pony, his mountaineering rambles; and we would fain have known his time of rising and of rest, the distribution of his hours, his method of study and composition, his love or disregard of external order, and such other trivial particulars as might complete the lineaments of his familiar life. Details of this kind, always full of expressiveness, are especially needed in a Life, the interest of which is that of portraiture, not of history. There is an entire absence from this biography of all outward incident and adventure. Even the ordinary struggles are wanting, through which men of thought and capacity, wrestling with poverty, or restrained by the singularities of their own genius, finally establish themselves in a professional career. There is not a single passage of suffering, — not a momentary crisis of difficulty, — nothing like a dramatic attitude of events, from the opening to the close. Arnold's way was quietly opened before him from year to year, and he had only to occupy the successive positions into which the most commonplace external causes threw him. At no time was it his task to choose a lot, with the world before him; but, what is more difficult, to travel on a routine path, without contracting the routine spirit, to keep the high-road of life, unsoiled by its dust, unexhausted by its heat, and pressing on to the last with all the freshness of an explorer. He was one who could be a hero without romance. To him "the narrow way that leadeth unto life" was no mountain by-path of existence, but just the personal track each faithful pilgrim

Digitized by Google

may pursue (though few, alas! there be that find it) on the same "broad road" by which many pass to their destruction.

It has been remarked, that a large proportion of the men who have obtained distinction in the world have been the last members of a large, or, as the Irish expressively term it, a *long* family. Among the English aristocracy this is the natural consequence of the law of primogeniture, and the practices connected with it, which throw the younger sons into professions requiring, for their successful exercise, a healthy culture of personal qualities. In the middle class it must arise from the less anxious and elaborate care, the freer hand usually applied by parents to their latest than to their earliest charge. There is thus a larger proportion of self-formation in the character, and the natural forces of the mind, exempt from the repression of system, display themselves, with less perhaps of the harmony that constitutes personal well-being, but with more of the strength which makes them effective on society. Arnold, the seventh child in a family early orphaned, was no exception to this rule. From childhood his mind seems to have been directed, rather than constrained; and, even during the eight years spent at Warminster and Winchester schools, to have indicated that eager and exclusive interest in every thing *human*, which at once disqualified him for eminence in Philology, in Science, in Metaphysics, and constituted his greatness as an Historian, a Politician, and a Divine. Ballad poetry, dramatic representation, history, and geography, every thing which brought

Digitized by Google

before his conception life and its scenery, had irresistible attractions even for his boyhood. With what remarkable tact this sympathy enabled him to detect what was untrue to nature in the legends of nations, is manifest from the following sentence, written when he was fourteen years old: — "I verily believe, that half at least of the Roman history is, if not totally false, at least scandalously exaggerated: how far different are the modest, unaffected, and impartial narrations of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon." (Vol. I. p. 5.)

His studies at Oxford tended to confirm his *Realism* of character. The neglect prevailing there of all formal science, with exception of the Deductive Logic, and the ascendant influence of Aristotle among the great masters of thought, and Thucydides among the models of history, combined with the vehement state controversies of the day, and the exciting progress of the Peninsular war, to engage his enthusiasm with practical questions of society and government, and to strengthen his inaptitude for poetical or speculative thought. In the private friendships, indeed, which he formed in the little circle of Corpus Christi, there was much to counteract the objective and prosaic cast of his character; his love especially for Keble and Mr. (now Justice) Coleridge, brought him under the influence of two minds, both of great richness, whose highest qualities formed the complement to his own. The first reverence with which an affectionate spirit looks up to one who is strong where it is weak, and light where it is dark, is often the birth-hour of its deep religious life: the

Digitized by Google

throbbing vital action in which the soul opens its chrysalis of sleepy and stationary habit, and assumes its free and winged state, amid the sunshine and the air of heaven. So it seems to us to have been with Arnold. His understanding was too robust, and his moral affections too decided, to be turned from their natural direction by any external agency; but his college attachments mingled an element of humility and devotion with a mental activity else too hardy and dogmatical; gave him the feeling of a sphere of truth and beauty different from his own; and habituated his mind to that upward look of trust and wonder, which is not indeed piety itself, but is as truly its genuine antecedent, as the raised hat and subdued footfall on entering a church are the natural prelude to the hour of prayer and aspiration. The influence of these associates, however, though touchingly referred to in later years, was imperfectly acknowledged at the time; the external form of his opinions and the habits of his intellect seemed to be engaged in constantly withstanding it. He was characterized by a vehement, and even disputatious independence; he apparently adhered to his utilitarian, rather than æsthetic estimate of the studies and attainments of the place; insensible to the beauty of the Greek drama, which was too much a beauty of *form* to please a perception fond of the depth of human coloring, and slighting refined and fastidious scholarship, on the plea of preferring the study of *things* to that of *words*. Yet he entered his college a Jacobin, and quitted it a high Tory: he became a convert to the rigorous discipline by

Digitized by Google

which a taste for philological niceties is formed; he permitted his theological doubts to be overawed and stifled by the remonstrance which Mr. Keble addressed, not to his reason, but to his fears and his affections; and in other ways gave symptoms of being now, for the first time, *subdued* into an apprehension of a wisdom not his own, and led by the power of an unconscious deference. Indeed, with some apparent dogmatism, Arnold appears from this time to have been exceedingly susceptible of influence from any man "rich in the combined and indivisible love of truth and goodness." No sooner did he exchange the society of Corpus Christi for that of Oriel, on his election to his fellowship, than a fresh series of changes became apparent in his views: in the presence of Davison, Copplestone, Whately, he felt the irresistible action of a new intellectual climate; and the seeds of all his characteristic beliefs, productive afterwards of fruit so wholesome, rapidly germinated and struck root. His abhorrence of sacerdotal religion, his conception of a Christian πολιτεία, his appreciation of the origin in human nature, and dangers in human society, of Conservation on the one hand and Jacobinism on the other, all date from the time of his connection with Oriel: and much of the character of his future works is, perhaps, referable to the fact, that their materials were mainly collected during this period, and were results of his reading in the Oxford libraries, whilst he was in the enjoyment of his fellowship. Even where his subsequent opinions deviated from the standard of the Oriel school of liberal divines, we

Digitized by Google

may trace the operation of a new influence; his veneration for Niebuhr and Bunsen completing the elevation of that structure of conviction of which the ground-plan had been traced in intimacy with Whately; and imparting an historic richness and Gothic sanctity to a system of thought having its foundations in philosophy. To this succession of admirations and their powerful but healthful agency upon him, he beautifully alludes in a letter to Mr. Justice Coleridge, apparently justifying himself from the charge of a presumptuous mental independence. The date is January 26th, 1840.

"Your letter interested me very deeply, and I have thought over what you say very often. Yet I believe that no man's mind has ever been more consciously influenced by others than mine has been in the course of my life, from the time that I first met you at Corpus. I doubt whether you ever submitted to another with the same complete deference as I did to you when I was an undergraduate. So, afterwards, I looked up to Davison with exceeding reverence, — and to Whately. Nor do I think that Keble himself has lived on in more habitual respect and admiration than I have, only the objects of these feelings have been very different. At this day I could sit at Bunsen's feet and drink in wisdom with almost intense reverence. But I cannot reverence the men that Keble reverences, and how does he feel to Luther and Milton? It gives me no pain and no scruple whatever to differ from those whom, after the most deliberate judgment that I can form, I cannot find to be worthy of admiration. Nor does their number affect me, when all are manifestly under the same influences, and no one seems to be a master-spirit, fitted to lead amongst men. But with wise men in the way

Digitized by Google

of their wisdom, it would give me very great pain to differ; I can say that truly with regard to your uncle, even more with regard to Niebuhr. . . . . .

"I was brought up in a strong Tory family; the first impressions of my own mind shook my merely received impressions to pieces, and at Winchester I was wellnigh a Jacobin. At sixteen, when I went up to Oxford, all the influences of the place which I loved exceedingly, your influence above all, blew my Jacobinism to pieces, and made me again a Tory. I used to speak strong Toryism to the old Attic Society, and greedily did I read Clarendon with all the sympathy of a thorough royalist. Then came the Peace, when Napoleon was put down, and the Tories had it their own way. Nothing shook my Toryism more than the strong Tory sentiments that I used to hear at ——, though I liked the family exceedingly. But I heard language at which my organ of justice stood aghast, and which, the more I read of the Bible, seemed to me more and more unchristian. I could not but go on inquiring, and I do feel thankful that now for some years past I have been living, not in scepticism, but in a very sincere faith which embraces most unreservedly those great truths, divine and human, which the highest authorities, divine and human, seem concurringly to teach." — Vol. II. p. 190.

There is one instance in which this openness to persuasion through his affections appears to us to have impaired the simplicity and clearness of Arnold's conscience. We say this with absolute sorrow of a man whose memory we love with devotion almost unreserved. We say it with self-distrust, because conscious that, in bringing a charge of doctrinal partiality, we may not ourselves be sufficiently without sin to cast the first stone. Still, we cannot

Digitized by Google

satisfy ourselves that Arnold got rid of his doubts about the Trinity by fair means: and in the advice given to him on the subject, we see so much of the mischievous sophistry and dishonest morality current on these matters among divines, that we feel bound to enter our protest as we pass. When he was about to resign his fellowship and take orders, previous to his marriage, he found his course embarrassed by doubts as to the doctrine of the Trinity. With the moral clearness and simplicity which invariably distinguished his natural judgments, he was willing to accept the doubt as a voice of God, and make a reverent pause in his career, while he listened to it, and pondered its intimations. But he was surrounded by associates who were incapable of appreciating such a state of mind, — who lifted their hands in pious horror at his perplexity, and treated it as the first coil of the old serpent lurking, as of old, in the path of a guilty curiosity. How little sympathy, and how much misdirection, he met with at this trying crisis of his life, will be apparent from the following passage of a letter, addressed (evidently by Keble) to Mr. Justice Coleridge, February 14th, 1819: —

"I have not talked with Arnold lately on the distressing thoughts which he wrote to you about, but I am fearful, from his manner at times, that he has by no means got rid of them, though I feel quite confident that all will be well in the end. The subject of them is that most awful one, on which all *very* inquisitive, reasoning minds are, I believe, most liable to such temptations, — I mean the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. Do not start, my dear Coleridge: I do

Digitized by Google

not believe that Arnold has serious scruples of the *understanding* about it, but it is a defect of his mind, that he cannot get rid of a certain feeling of objections, — and particularly when, as he fancies, the bias is so strong upon him to decide one way from interest: he scruples doing what I advise him, which is, to put down the objections by main force, whenever they arise in his mind, fearful that in so doing he shall be violating his conscience for a maintenance' sake. I am still inclined to think with you, that the wisest thing he could do would be to take John M. (a young pupil whom I was desirous of placing under his care) and a curacy somewhere or other, and cure himself, not by physic, i. e. reading and controversy, but by diet and regimen, i. e. holy living." — Vol. I. p. 21.

The sacerdotal sophistry of this letter is so complete and characteristic, that the subsequent career of the writer seems to be almost prefigured in it. To quench by the "main force" of an idolatrous reverence the truthful aspirations of a holy spirit, and suppress the starts of a waking conscience by the hideous nightmare of church power, is the grand aim of the school to which he belongs; and the perverseness with which he here designates the purest sincerity as "*a defect* of Arnold's mind," counsels a sceptical man to "take a curacy" *in order to believe* the doctrines he is to teach, and calls the dishonest stifling of thought in action "holy living," is singularly symptomatic of the moral blindness to which superstition inevitably tends. We are far from denying that there are cases of embarrassed thought, in which the advice here given would be the best, and the only cure must be sought in active duty,

Digitized by Google

not in lonely meditation. We admit the error of treating all sorts of doubt indiscriminately as mere affairs of the intellect, determinable by pure reasoning, and equally possible to every condition of the character and will. Unquestionably, the effect upon a man of what is called "evidence" depends, in subjects of a moral nature, not less upon the susceptibility of his conscience and affections, than on the acuteness of his understanding: and any one who forbids us ever to judge others by their belief, and requires from us an equal sympathy for all states of mind consistent with good conduct, is deluded by the cant of a philosophy which he himself neither does nor can reduce to practice. There is no more full and direct expression of a man's whole mind than the faith by which he lives; and by this, better than by any single symptom, do we know one another, and keep apart in strangeness, or draw together in love. But there is a distinction to be drawn between spiritual and simply historical religion, — and between doubts arising from spiritual obtuseness, and those which are due to want of historical light. Religion, we conceive, like morals and physics, has *first* truths, which are incapable of being *derived* from any thing more certain than themselves, — which the human mind, at a particular point of its development, invariably recognizes, and the intuition of which is a direct result of the activity of its highest faculties. As no one without senses could ascertain the reality of matter, or without self-consciousness become aware of the existence of mind, so no one without moral perceptions and desires

Digitized by Google

could learn the being or feel the presence of a God. Believing the knowledge of him to be in direct proportion, not to the sharpness of the intellect, but to the purity, depth, and earnestness of the heart, we can understand why a moral remedy, rather than a speculative discipline, should be prescribed for the genuine atheist, and he should be desired to do the Will ere he deny the Agency of God. With one who questions a *first* truth, you *can* do nothing but improve his mental aptitude for apprehending it. But who can affirm that the doctrine of the Trinity stands in this predicament? Who can say that there is any condition of the character to which it becomes self-evident? — that the numerical analysis of Deity is "experimentally" revealed through the moral dispositions? The doctrine, as its supporters are the most eager to aver, is wholly the result of external testimony, and on the right reading of that testimony depends its truth or falsehood. If it be said that an indisposition to receive it may arise from a mean repugnance to any thing wonderful and great, and a propensity to make every thing comprehensible, that we may have the less that is adorable, even this, which in other cases is a misrepresentation, is in Arnold's instance inapplicable: for Mr. Justice Coleridge expressly assures us, that his doubts "were not low nor rationalistic in their tendency, according to the bad sense of that term: there was no indisposition in him to believe merely because the article transcended his reason; he doubted the proof and the interpretation of the textual authority." (Vol. I. p. 20.)

Digitized by Google

How could doubts like these, not arising from deficient idealism and love, having confessedly no "wilful" origin, be justly treated as wicked "temptations," and legitimately resisted by prayer and practice? Can a change in the moral state settle a question of disputed interpretation? Will active life improve the exegetic skill? Will a batch of hard work enable a man to punctuate Timothy, explain ἅρπαγμα, and penetrate the true meaning of the Paraclete? Can parish duty remove obscurity from the proem of John? and a curacy demonstrate the Athanasian Creed? What can be more evident than that the advice given to Arnold was good for stifling the doubt, bad for reaching the truth? It is as if Mr. Justice Coleridge were to decide a question of law by shutting his ears (per "main force") against one half the pleadings, nightly remembering the others in his prayers, refusing to consult his books of precedents, and submitting the matter to the ordeal of a brisk walk. Unhappily, the solemn sophistry, recommended by the entreaties of friendship, and decorated with the phrases of academical devotion, appears to have imposed upon Arnold. Mr. Justice Coleridge refers "*the conclusion of these doubts*" to a later period of his life, "when his mind had not become weaker, nor his pursuit of truth less honest or ardent, but when his abilities were matured, his knowledge greater, his judgment more sober." We know not how to avoid the obvious inference from this statement, that Arnold's doubts did not vanish till long after he had assumed the clerical office; that he was ordained in the midst of them; that he

Digitized by Google

signed the Articles first, and believed them afterwards. This indeed is painfully evident from the date of Mr. Keble's letter descriptive of his state of mind; for at the time when it was written, he had already been in holy orders for two months, having received ordination in December, 1818. Are we not justified in saying, that he admitted the influence of others to have an improper suffrage in matters where his own conscience would have been the better guide? What sort of "*holy living*" must that be, which, as advised by the saintliest of his friends, could be entered only through an inauguration of falsehood and pretence? And when disingenuousness like this can be advised by Keble, practised by Arnold, applauded by Mr. Justice Coleridge, and tacitly approved by Mr. Stanley, what must we surmise as to the morality of opinion within the Church, and what value can be attached to the apparent testimony of its learning and its worth to the doctrines it upholds with so proud a dignity?

Questionable practice is the natural source of sophistical theory: and it is not wonderful that this one weak point in Arnold's life should entail a corresponding unsoundness in his notions of subscription to articles of faith. Of this act he defended the lax construction by which alone he could have found admission into the Church; a construction *so* lax, that his apology for it fills us with astonishment and shame. His doctrine and example on this point, recommended by his general simplicity and integrity, are likely to be widely injurious; and, thrown into the balance against wavering principle, have already,

Digitized by Google

we have reason to believe, determined many a youth to an evasive conformity. If the question could be submitted to the simple, veracious perceptions of a child, whether a man may not declare his belief in some things which he disbelieves, there would be no fear; the very question would be seen to be immoral, and one on which no argument could even be innocently heard. If it were submitted only to men of strong sense and intellect wholly unsuborned, there would be no fear; they would see straight through the hollow ingenuities interposed to color and distort the truth. But there are weak, bewildered minds, to whom a pleasant fallacy comes with all the force of conviction; uneasy from the wish to serve two masters; too scrupulous to make a deceitful profession, but ready to hear evidence in favor of its honesty; shrinking from the positive approaches of falsehood, yet looking after it with lust of the eye; and these half-souls are they for whom Arnold's guidance in this matter is dangerous. With the perverseness of those who search the lessons of life for justification of their weakness, rather than for the ennobling of their strength, they will appropriate the one only dishonest comfort that can be gathered from a good man's history; flattering themselves that they are wiser by his wisdom, and holier by his faithfulness, they will be but partners in his infirmity, and victims of his mistake.

Arnold's practical morality on the matter of subscription and confession appears from the following sentences: —

"I *do not believe* the damnatory clauses in the Athana-

Digitized by Google

sian Creed, under any qualification given of them, except such as substitute for them propositions of a wholly different character. . . . . *But I read* the Athanasian Creed, and have and would again subscribe the Article about it."— Vol. II. p. 120.

It is to be presumed that, in reading the Creed, Dr. Arnold did not omit the "damnatory clauses." Then he publicly pronounced a most solemn anathema of which he did not believe a word! He asserted a thing to be "above all things necessary to salvation," which he did not suppose to be necessary at all! He warned many a hearer that "without doubt he should perish everlastingly," apprehending all the while no danger whatsoever! Nothing surely but the terrible paralysis of custom could deaden a man's sense of the guilt of so great a mockery. Were he to hurry through his task lest he should be struck dumb in the midst, we should scarcely think it an unnatural superstition. Apart from all question as to the engagements made at his ordination, it is a shocking Jesuitry to maintain that a clergyman — instructor of the people's conscience and messenger of their prayers — need not assent to the promise or the curse he utters in the hour of worship, and may innocently invite his hearers to stand up with him before God, and take lying judgments upon their lips.

And what is the plea put forth to blunt the edge of our natural indignation at such laxity?

"I have and would again subscribe the Article about it [the Athanasian Creed], because I do not conceive the clauses in question to be essential parts of it. I

Digitized by Google

do not imagine that the Article about the Creed was intended in the least to refer to the clauses." — Vol. II. pp. 120, 121.

Be it so: what does this amount to but the plea, "I *never engaged to believe* these falsehoods, so why should I object to utter them"? Is insincerity then quite allowable, except where a man has contracted to avoid it? And are the words of holy men to be no index to their minds unless a truthful intent has been written in the bond? The obligation to guileless veracity does not arise from ordination promises and doctrinal subscription, and does not stop where they happen to terminate. Take away Articles, signature, vows altogether, and it is no less a duty than before, for a man to say only the thing he truly means. His added pledge is but a recognition of the antecedent obligation, an assurance to others that he owns the justice of their moral expectations, and has a sense of right and fidelity concurrent with their own.

But let us even accept Arnold's mode of putting the case, and see whether Churchmen such as he can be justified in signing the eighth Article, which is as follows: —

"The three Creeds, Nice Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostle's Creed, ought *thoroughly* to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

Arnold resolves the Athanasian Creed into two parts; one defining the doctrine of the Trinity; the other defining the Divine purpose with respect to

Digitized by Google

unbelievers in it: the one therefore referring to the psychological nature, the other to the moral character of God; the one pronouncing on the mysteries of his Absolute Essence, the other on the principles of his Relative conduct and sentiments towards men. Strangely inverting the comparative importance of these, Arnold decides that the incomprehensible metaphysics are the essential part, — the intelligible declarations of law, the non-essential: and he argues, "I believe the former, I do not believe the latter; so I may say that I believe the creed '*thoroughly*.'" And is there the least ground, except in the convenience of half-believers, for this dismemberment of the Creed? Not the slightest. The "damnatory clauses" are not only inseparably interwoven with it, beginning, middle, and end, but logically constitute the substantive affirmation of the whole document, of which the statement of the "Catholic Faith" is but a dependent and subordinate member. Perhaps, however, there may be *historical* reasons for Arnold's view, not apparent from the mere structure of this formulary. Let us hear: —

"I do not conceive the clauses in question were retained deliberately by our Reformers after the propriety of retaining or expunging them had been distinctly submitted to their minds. They retained the Creed, I doubt not, deliberately; to show that they wished to keep the faith of the general Church in matters relating to the Arian, Macedonian, Nestorian, Eutychian, and Socinian controversies; and, as they did not scruple to burn Arians, so neither would they be likely to be shocked by the damnatory clauses against them; but I do not imagine that the Article about the Creed was

Digitized by Google

intended in the least to refer to the clauses, as if they supposed that a man might embrace the rest of the Creed, and yet reject them. Nor do I think that the Reformers, or the best and wisest men of the Church since, would have objected to any man's subscription, if they had conceived such a case; but would have said, 'What we mean you to embrace is the belief of the general Church, as expressed in the three Creeds, with regard to the points, many of them having been disputed, on which those Creeds pronounce: the degree of blamableness in those who do not embrace this belief is another matter, on which we do not intend to speak, particularly in this Article.' I do not think that there is any thing evasive or unfair in this." — Vol. II. p. 121.

A thoughtful man must assuredly be very hard-pressed, before he could produce so extraordinary an argument as this. In the times of the Reformers, it appears, there were two grades of certainty felt as to Christian doctrine. Some points had been disputed, and were known to be in peril from the variable movements of opinion: others had never been called in question, and remained fixed in unconscious security as the faith of Christendom. The doctrine of the Trinity was among the former; the perdition of heretics and unbelievers among the latter. The Reformers were well acquainted with Arian and Socinian perverseness, — and had perhaps not been without difficulties on these matters themselves: but that misbelievers must be damned, is a thing which they never supposed that any body could doubt. They burned Arians without scruple; and made sure that God would burn them too. Upon both these elements of their belief, the questioned

Digitized by Google

and the unquestioned, they have left us their mind; what reception are we to give it, when we bind ourselves to their formularies? Arnold's decision is,— "We must adopt their *opinions;* but we may freely throw away their *certainties:* what they knew to be *mutable*, we must not presume to change; what they supposed to be *immutable*, we may alter as we please." Is it conceivable that the founders of the Reformed Churches, while binding their followers on all debated matters, meant to leave them free on all the questions which no scepticism had yet dared to approach? True, they did not contemplate the particular case of half-belief which now arises, and made no special provision to meet it. But a man may abstain from taking security for either of two reasons, because he is willing to make us a present, or because he is assured we shall acknowledge the debt. Arnold admits the profoundness and unconsciousness of the Reformers' trust, and gives it as a reason for cheating them of their obedience, and pocketing a license which they never left. And he thinks there is "nothing evasive or unfair in this"!

In other passages he defends the acceptance of holy orders by men who "cannot yield an active belief to the words of every part of the Articles and Liturgy as true," on the ground that, without this latitude, "the Church could by necessity receive into the ministry only men of dull minds, or dull consciences: of dull, nay almost of dishonest minds, if they can persuade themselves that they actually agree in every minute particular with any great number of human propositions; of dull consciences,

Digitized by Google

if, exercising their minds freely, and yet believing that the Church requires the total adhesion of the understanding, they still, for considerations of their own convenience, enter into the ministry in her despite." (Vol. II. p. 173.)

The reasoning of this passage, if we understand it, proceeds thus: The Church must have men of active minds; only men of dull minds can sign the Articles with full belief; therefore the Church must have *men who sign the Articles without full belief.* But these men must also have lively consciences: if they take signature to denote full belief, they must have dull consciences to sign without it; therefore they should think that signature does *not* denote full belief. Unhappily, however, this *a priori* argument lands us in conclusions wholly at variance with fact. The Church has not left her intent as to the Articles and Liturgy, and the degree of assent demanded to them, a matter of doubtful inference. The thirty-sixth Canon orders that "no person shall be received into the ministry," — "except he shall first subscribe to these three Articles following, in such manner and sort as we have here appointed."

1. The declaration of supremacy, which it is needless to cite.

"2. That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, *containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God*, &c.

"3. That he alloweth the Book of *Articles of Religion* agreed upon by the Archbishops, &c.; and that he acknowledgeth *all and every* the Articles therein contained, being in number nine-and-thirty,

Digitized by Google

besides the Ratification, to be agreeable to the Word of God.

"To these three Articles, whosoever will subscribe, he shall, *for the avoiding of all ambiguities*, subscribe in this order, and form of words, setting down both his Christian and surname, viz.: 'I, N. N., do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to these three Articles above mentioned, and to all things that are contained in them.'"

All argument against the necessity of *ex animo* subscription being set aside by this Canon, Dr. Arnold has only put it in the power of opponents to retort upon the Church thus: — All clergymen must declare their full assent to the Articles and Liturgy: in doing this, they either honestly believe them throughout, or they do not: if they do, they are men of "dull minds"; if they do not, they are men of "dull consciences"; therefore "the Church can receive into its ministry only men of dull minds or dull consciences." And is it not undeniable that, in fact, the entrance into her service, smooth and easy to thoughtless mediocrity and worldly ambition, is beset by scruples and difficulties, chiefly for men of intellectual genius and moral earnestness? A Beresford and a Blomfield glide in with complacent smiles; an Arnold passes with reluctant starts, and bitter conflicts, and many a pause of prayer and fear. They carry with them the undisturbed consistency so easy to minds without lofty aspiration, and are of no dimmer sight or less graceful movement than before: but he has withstood the repugnance of his noble nature, and a speck is thenceforth fixed on his intel-

Digitized by Google

lectual clearness, which, at one part of his course of thought, compels him to feel his way along the conventional path, and restrains the free step with which elsewhere he pursues "in open vision" only what is great and true.

For nine years after his ordination, Arnold was settled, as private tutor, at Laleham, near Staines: mingling, with the duties of his own house, no slight share of aid to the curate of the parish, in the church, the workhouse, and the cottage. The period was one of little incident, but of the deepest moment in his internal history. It was his initiation into the real business of life, and showed at once the masterly hand with which he was to rule its affairs and manage its responsibilities. It was the commencement of his most sacred domestic ties, and bears traces of the genial ripening of his character beneath the warmth of new affections. It witnessed the beginning of all his literary undertakings, and the completion of his articles on Roman History in the Encyclopædia Metropolitana. It introduced him to the knowledge of Niebuhr, whose influence was thenceforth to constitute so large an element in his mental progress. But the great function of this time was to establish the real seat of Arnold's strength; it became evident at once that he was at home, not in the cloister, but in the city and the field: respectable in scholarship, insensible to art, undistinguished in philosophy, he was great in action. His sphere was not large: but the healthy vigor which he infused into the whole; the moral earnestness which put pupils, household, almost the

Digitized by Google

village, under his control; the quantity of *work* of all sorts which he got through himself, and inspired others to achieve, indicated the remarkable capacity for *government*, which dictated his early longing for a statesman's life. And, as is usual in such cases, the expansion of the leading faculty, instead of overwhelming, reawakened all the rest: the more he *did*, the more also he *thought* and *felt;* reflection and emotion deepening and widening through the materials of an outward industry, which, he sometimes feared, would stifle them. Archbishop Whately had early pointed out the indications, in Arnold's fellowship examination, of a remarkable faculty of mental *growth*. We doubt whether the prediction, true as it was, would have been conspicuously fulfilled, if he had remained within the walls of a college. In him, intellect and affection waited upon the conscience and the Will; and became great and rich and tender in the divine hardships of duty, and the strenuous service of God. During the years spent at Laleham, especially the earlier ones, there are many marks of crude, unmellowed feeling, of conventional sentiment, of prosaic and utilitarian estimates of human interests. The thoughts with which he anticipates his married lot (Vol. I. p. 60) are after the most ordinary fashion of moralizing. His views in the choice of a profession are according to the approved canons of spiritual prudence; and he takes to the Church, not so much inspired by the high aims of a holy calling, as from the wish for an asylum (Vol. I. p. 53) from moral danger, *μὴ σεβάσεως, ἀλλ' ἀσκήσεως ἕνεκα*. Even his sermons contain more

Digitized by Google

profit-and-loss religion than consists with the nobleness of his later Christianity; as in p. 243, where "the good which a man may get from acting" on holy principle is made to depend on its "lasting for ever," instead of "being over in less than a hundred years." And finally, his style — that unerring expression of a man's whole spiritual nature — was at this time rude and shapeless, marked by a certain business-like simplicity and directness, but destitute of the force given by the under-play of a living enthusiasm beneath the dry matter of the composition. The fuel, however, of his central being was kindled; life, like a glowing furnace, rose to a higher and higher intensity, and penetrated with a glorious heat even his originally colder and remoter faculties; till his whole nature was fused into one living mass, radiating force and fire throughout the sphere of his activity.

It was not till he assumed his office as head master of Rugby School, that all the energy and greatness of his character were fully brought out. The fourteen years which he spent there, were in all respects the most memorable of his career; showing how, amid many discouragements and frequent loneliness in his favorite aims, he could prevail over the heaviest tasks submitted to his hands, and the most plausible sophistries competing for his mind. We must dismiss with few words the whole subject of his School management. It is admitted on all hands, that he turned to the best account all the elements of good in the English system of public schools, and struggled manfully and with unexampled success against its peculiar evils. His general

Digitized by Google

theory of his office may be stated thus; — the peculiar character of the *English gentleman* being assumed as an historical datum, the aim of education should be to penetrate and pervade this with a spirit of Christian self-regulation. He was aware how great was the revolution implied in the accomplishment of this end; that moral heroism must take the place of feudal independence; devout allegiance, of personal self-will; respect for faithful work, of the ambition for careless idleness; manly simplicity and earnestness, of gentlemanly *poco-curanteism;* the true shame for evil, of the false shame for good; that contempt of pleasure must be added to the contempt of danger and of pain; and courage to defy corrupt fashion and opinion, to the hardihood which resists the aggressions of unjust authority. With numbers of his scholars he doubtless realized a near approximation to his aim; with none, perhaps, did he wholly fail; for he strongly marked, and rendered unmistakably felt, the evils with which he was resolved to contend, and by which he would never be baffled. There was no hope that he would ever connive at any thing false or wrong; there was no fear that he would overlook or desert any faithful will, striving with limited powers within, or the jeers of low ridicule without. There was established an absolute confidence in his truth and justice: every culprit felt the shadow of his frown, every clear conscience the assurance of his protection. His attention was not reserved for pupils of remarkable attainments and brilliant promise, who might reward his assiduity by conferring distinction on their in-

Digitized by Google

structor. None were so loved and honored as those who persisted in laborious effort without the power or talent to win admiration and command success; of such a one he said, "I could stand before that man, *hat in hand.*" And if, amid the host of the foolish and corrupt, there appeared any

> "Abdiel, faithful found
> Among the faithless, faithful only he;
> Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified";

he was secure of Arnold's exulting sympathy, and, as "he passed long way through hostile scorn," might hear in heart his voice of blessing,

> "Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought
> The better fight, who single hast maintained
> Against revolted multitudes the cause
> Of truth."

The personal qualities of Arnold were eminently fitted to give success to these high aims and noble sympathies. Frank, brave, guileless, he mingled no moroseness with his moral severity, no weakness with his pity, no secrecy with his vigilance. His joyous and trustful nature had never divested itself of the best attributes of boyhood, but simply added to them the wisdom and the strength of manhood. His elastic spirits, his vivacity of expression, his love of the open air and all athletic sports, were no inconsiderable qualifications for obtaining the admiration of boys; and, above all, he wholly lost sight of *himself*, and never gave occasion for even the perversest spirit to suspect that his battle with school evils was a contest for personal dignity or power; in his dom-

Digitized by Google

inance over wrong, he was himself but *serving* the right. But the most vivid individual character could not directly reach the multitude collected in a public school. In the chapel, indeed, they were all submitted immediately to his most powerful influence, and the constancy and fervor with which he availed himself of this means of discipline are known to all who are familiar with his Rugby Sermons. At this moment, no poem, no biography, actual or possible, occurs to us, which we had rather read, than the secret spirit-history of that chapel. The many-colored thoughts, evanescent, it may be, but not traceless, of those young hearts; the dark, obdurate will, struck by a sudden flash, then closing sullenly again; the light, unstable mind, fluttered with momentary shame; the first sense of lost innocence, awakening the sorrowful images of too happy sisters, and mother with no reproaches on her face; the manly pity for a younger brother newly come, and high resolves, were it only for his sake; the eager outlook into life, deep in its early flush of glory; the opening awe, the thrilling touch, of things invisible; the dawning perception of the divineness of Christ, and nearness of the living God; the tumultuous grief roused by the funeral bell, or the solemn wonder, as if it swung in the air of eternity, and made the dead silence speak, — all these primal stirrings of expanding life contain the profoundest interest and beauty, both as prophetic of a most various human growth, and as attesting the healthful power of the soul creating it.

In connection with this part of Arnold's labors,

Digitized by Google

we have seen new reason to justify an old admiration for a religious rite prevailing in most of the Protestant churches, — the practice of *Confirmation*. We have no sympathy, indeed, with the form which it assumes in the English Church; we acknowledge the admixture with it of false and pernicious moral ideas; we object to its use, as an appendage to the ceremony of Baptism, and its connection with the superstitions represented by that word. Still, when stripped of ritual and traditional adhesions, it represents a momentous fact in the religious life of individuals, and helps to turn that fact to its proper account. There is a period, extending some years beyond mere infancy, of imperfect and inchoate responsibility, during which the unreflecting play of instinctive feeling constitutes the *moving force*, and external restraint prescribed by others affords the *regulative principle*, of all our activity; the child is delivered over for guidance to his parents and protectors, with whom rests the largest share of accountability for what he is, for what he believes, for what he loves. This period passes away; and another comes, in which the instinctive temptations become more dangerous, and less within reach of outward rule and authority; but at the same time the faculties needed for self-guidance rapidly approach their full dimensions: reflective self-consciousness deepens, manifesting itself under the form of mere shyness in ordinary natures, of boastful and irreverent license in bad ones, of moral thoughtfulness in minds of higher tone: the knowledge of good and evil, and the force of the electing will,

Digitized by Google

assume new precision and strength; and the objects both of human admiration and of religious faith become the centres of more intent inspection and earnest wonder. The transition from one of these periods to the other is perhaps the greatest spiritual crisis of human life; the turn of the tide, when we quit the haven and drift to the unstable sea, with or without the compass for dark nights, and the eye skilled to steer by the eternal stars. We would mark, with devout recognition, this era of experience; give voice, method, and direction to its tumultuous emotions; bring its burning aspirations to merge in the cool ascending breath of prayer; distinctly present the young disciple, fast becoming one of us, before the Master at whose feet he is to sit, and the God whose still, small voice he is to hear. True, the step into this full responsibility is not instantaneous, and can have no exact date assigned to it; and no turn should be given to a confirmation service, implying that personal accountability is *postponed* till its arrival. But exaggerations of this kind are easily avoided, so as to render such a rite truly symbolical of the fact; and, with such provision, we would fain, by some Christian consecration, claim for good the young romance of life, and turn the seasonal bloom of nature into fruitful flowers of pure faith.

With all the aids of the chapel services, Arnold could not bring his personal influence to bear immediately upon many of the scholars. Without some interposed medium between himself and the multitude of boys, it was impossible to propagate the

Digitized by Google

power of his ideas and principles throughout the school. For this end, he not only availed himself of the coöperation of the Assistant Masters, but, bringing the Sixth Form or Præpostors into close connection with himself, invested them with larger powers and more direct responsibilities of control over the younger pupils than they had possessed before. This system offered, doubtless, the best chance of introducing some approach to moral government into the wild elements of a public school; and infused a wholesome action of the ἄριστοι into the combination usually presented in such an institution, of turbulent democracy, and absolute despotism. For the youths themselves, thus trusted by Arnold with a share of his authority, the benefit was great. The manliness, the earnestness, the religious convictions, which were remarked at Oxford and Cambridge as frequent characteristics of the Rugby scholars, were mainly acquired, it is probable, during the period of immediate contact with himself. The general impression, however, of the public school system, even as worked by Arnold, which we derive from these volumes, is very painful; and strongly confirms the unfavorable recollections of our own experience. We have often thought that Hobbes's theory of society must have been suggested by his remembrance of the grammar-school at Malmesbury. If there is any place in the world where every body is convinced that he has a right to every thing, and with unlimited voracity of claim absorbs whatever is within his reach, until he clashes against the appetences, no less universal and no less entitled, of his

Digitized by Google

neighbors in the scramble; where a state of war is the state of nature, ever and anon resumed to settle the exact sphere of every new-comer, and all determination of rights has to be fought out; where order and law prevail in unstable equilibrium (like the right of search among our French allies) as disagreeable conditions of a treaty of peace, and the only principle truly and heartily respected is, Do, if you dare, — certainly that place is an English public school. Speaking loosely, to live as they like and as they can is the primary rule of children; to live as they ought, the primary rule for men. A crew of boys is an aggregate of self-wills, limiting one another by mutual interference and repulsion. A society of men is a community of consciences as well as interests, combining by mutual reverence, coöperation, and attraction. Hence public opinion, in adult society, is expressive of the minimum of moral principle that will be allowed; in schools, of the maximum of moral principle that will be endured: and the force which, in our maturest strength, comes in aid of conscience, in our early weakness presses, with frequent scoff and scorn, against it. This is an unequal match for wills imperfectly inured to hardihood. Hence Arnold's frequent laments as to the irresistible strength of a low and tyrannical school-opinion; his vain attempts to encourage any large number to struggle against the stream; his sorrow, ever renewed, at watching the declension from innocence to corruption; and his pathetic forebodings on receiving, at the opening of each half-year, boys now in their home simplicity, but entering on a trial,

Digitized by Google

always severe, and rarely triumphant. He admits that, while minds of peculiar strength are elevated by the ordeal, the ordinary class of amiable, well-disposed, *neutral* characters are usually carried away by the evil influence of the place, and gradually sink from promise into corruption. Can there be a plainer confession of the unfitness of these schools for the vast majority of boys? Startled by the detection of something wrong, he exclaimed on one occasion: —

"If this goes on, it will end either my life at Rugby, or my life all together. How can I go on with my Roman History? There all is noble and high-minded, and here I find nothing but the reverse."

And in a letter to Sir T. Pasley he says: —

"Since I began this letter, I have had some of the troubles of school-keeping; and one of those specimens of the evil of boy-nature, which makes me always unwilling to undergo the responsibility of advising any man to send his son to a public school. There has been a system of persecution carried on by the bad against the good; and then, when complaint was made to me, there came fresh persecution on that very account; and divers instances of boys joining in it out of pure cowardice, both physical and moral, when, if left to themselves, they would have rather shunned it. And the exceedingly small number of boys who can be relied upon for active and steady good on these occasions, and the way in which the decent and respectable of ordinary life (Carlyle's 'Shams') are sure on these occasions to swim with the stream, and take part with the evil, makes me strongly feel exemplified what the Scripture says about the strait gate and the wide one, — a view of human nature, which, when looking on human life in its full dress of decencies and civilizations, we are apt, I im-

Digitized by Google

agine, to find it hard to realize. But here, in the nakedness of boy-nature, one is quite able to understand how there could not be found so many as even ten righteous in a whole city. And how to meet this evil I really do not know; but to find it thus rife after I have been [so many] years fighting against it, is so sickening, that it is very hard not to throw up the cards in despair, and upset the table. But then the stars of nobleness, which I see amidst the darkness, in the case of the few good, are so cheering, that one is inclined to stick to the ship again, and have another good try at getting her about." — Vol. I. p. 161.

That he was not, however, without the refreshments due to so faithful a heart, is evident from the conclusion of the following passage, of most characteristic beauty: —

"A great school is very trying. It never can present images of rest and peace; and when the spring and activity of youth is altogether unsanctified by any thing pure and elevated in its desires, it becomes a spectacle that is as dizzying, and almost more morally distressing, than the shouts and gambols of a set of lunatics. It is very startling to see so much of sin combined with so little of sorrow. In a parish, amongst the poor, whatever of sin exists, there is sure also to be enough of suffering; poverty, sickness, and old age are mighty tamers and chastisers. But, with boys of the richer classes, one sees nothing but plenty, health, and youth; and these are really awful to behold, when one must feel that they are unblessed. On the other hand, few things are more beautiful than when one does see all holy thoughts and principles, not the forced growth of pain, or infirmity, or privation; but springing up, as by God's immediate planting, in a sort of garden of all that is fresh and beautiful; full of so much hope for this world as well as for heaven." — Vol. II. p. 137.

Digitized by Google

Though Arnold's great work lay at Rugby, and he achieved it in a way which was soon felt in every public school in England, his sympathies were not collected there; they were interwoven with society at every fibre, and bled with the wounds of humanity everywhere. No danger could befall the state, but he was startled by it, and stood up to give the warning or inspire the defence. No idolatries could be set up within the Church, but he exposed and confronted them with resolute Iconoclasm. And as evils of both kinds seemed to him to arise from a false theory of Christianity on the one hand, and a false conception of the τέλος of civilized communities on the other, the great purpose of his life was to write a work on Christian politics, organizing into a system, and presenting in their unity, the opinions now scattered over his occasional writing and correspondence on Theology, Social Philosophy, Ecclesiastical Polity, Education, and Government. For want of an adequate exposition of his staminal ideas on this subject, it is difficult even now, and was much more so at the time of their expression, to criticize with advantage his sentiments on the party topics of the day; and they often appeared like narrow prejudices, when in fact they were deductions from a wide and generous philosophy. As we may have occasion in a future Number to notice his "Fragment on the Church," just published at the particular desire, it is understood, of Mr. Bunsen, we shall reserve this whole matter, with his connected opinions as to the terms of citizenship and the methods of public education, for consideration hereafter.

Digitized by Google

Even his Roman History was subsidiary in his mind to the development of his conception as to a Christian πολιτεία. To his practical understanding no theory of the Church could be constructed without its history; no history of it could be written without entering deeply into the spirit of its early struggle with Paganism, and observing the inevitable action and reaction of the two religions; nor could any apprehension of that spirit be reached, without a sympathy with the recollections and traditional glories which gave the Western Polytheism its strength, and a consequent familiarity with the palmy days and legendary lore of Roman faith and Roman virtue. Over this border-land, covered with the cities of the old civilization, and the forest-growth of the new, Gibbon is at present our only guide. His sympathies were wholly given, not only to the ancient world, but to its period of material grandeur and corruption, when the severity of its manners and the earnestness of its life had passed away. His whole spirit was unsocial and irreverent; his affections never deep in the sorrows, his moral sense not revolted by the sins, of the beings he presents on his magnificent stage; his imagination resting on the pageantry, the scenery, the mechanism, the dress, the evolutions of national existence, but not penetrating to its real *life;* and his Epicurean cast of character wholly disqualifying him for any appreciation of the genius and agency of Christianity. Arnold's enthusiasm fell pretty nearly on the same objects as Gibbon's contempt; travelling through the heathen world as a disciple of the porch rather than the gar-

Digitized by Google

den, he pitched his admiration on Republican, not on Imperial Rome; and passing through Christendom, not as an alien, but as a sworn brother, he would have taught men the meaning of a "*martyr*," and made them feel that it was *not* ridiculous to lay down the life for simplicity and truth.

There are, we think, in Arnold's scheme of opinion, many deviations from *logical* consistency. But there never was a man whose system of thought was pervaded by a more evident *moral* consistency. His character — a living whole — cannot be analyzed without being lost from view. Its beauty is not of form, like a statue; or of color, like a picture; but of *movement*, like — what he simply was — a *man*: and the moment you arrest it to seek its essence, it is gone. Still we may say, without much error, that at the very fountain-head of his nature, far up as among the old granitic rocks of a hardier world, there sprang up a clear, fresh, exhaustless *love of goodness;* that sometimes rushed down in a torrent, like passion, only that, with all its vehemence, it was never turbid; that mingled a purity with all the courses of his thought, and fertilized the retreats of his affections, and wholly surrounded and baptized the temple of his worship. The *moral* element — and that too, originally, in its bare and rugged form of the sense of justice and hatred of wrong — was transcendent over all else in him. It was not, as in most men, passive and negative, content with preserving its possessor from evil, and exercising only a *protectorate;* but a right royal power, with divine title to the world; aggressive, indom-

Digitized by Google

itable, magnanimous. Christianity had something to do, to make him rest and sit as a disciple at the feet; to raise him to the spiritual heights of its heaven, and subdue him to the sweet charities of earth. But it did both. He was an evangelized Stoic. From walking in the Porch, he came to kneel before the Cross. No wonder that he burst into tears, when — once in conversation — St. Paul was set in some one's estimate above St. John: for he himself passed from the likeness of one towards that of the other, and so had sympathies with both; and the fire of the man of Tarsus subdued itself in him, as life advanced, more and more into the Ephesian apostle's altar-light of saintly love.

The leading principle of his character may be traced through his sentiments on subjects wildly remote from each other. It was his *Moral Faculty*, his sense of *Obligation*, that awakened his intense antipathy to both *Benthamism* and *Newmanism*, — the two grand counterfeits forged at the opposite extremes of error, of true moral responsibility and personal duty; the one merging the conscience in self-interest, the other in priestcraft; the one identifying moral and sentient good, the other separating moral and spiritual; both extinguishing the proper personality and individual sacredness of man; the one treating him as a thing to be mechanically shaped, the other as a thing to be mysteriously conjured with; with infallible nostrums, labelled "motives" in the one case, "sacraments" in the other, promising to cure the sick world, but alas! only decoying it from the natural sources of health, and spoiling its

Digitized by Google

relish for the free breath of heaven. In opposition to both these systems, which sought for human conduct some *external* guide, one in social utility, the other in church authority, Arnold held fast to the *internal* guidance, which he maintained God had given to all, and through which his Will was practicable, and Himself accessible to all. That this was the precise position which he conceived himself to occupy, is evident from the following exposition of his moral faith: —

"To supply the place of Conscience with the ἀρχαι of Fanaticism on one hand, and of Utilitarianism on the other, — on one side is the mere sign from Heaven, craved by those who heeded not Heaven's first sign written within them; — on the other, it is the idea, which, hardly hovering on the remotest outskirts of Christianity, readily flies off to the camp of Materialism and Atheism; the mere pared and plucked notion of 'good' exhibited by the word 'useful'; which seems to me the idea of 'good' robbed of its nobleness, — the sediment from which the filtered water has been assiduously separated. It were a strange world, if there were indeed no one ἀρχιτεκτονικὸν εἶδος but that of the ξύμφερον; if καλον were only καλον, ὅτι ξύμφερον. But this is one of the peculiarities of the English mind; the Puritan and the Benthamite has an inmense part of this in common; and thus the Christianity of the Puritan is coarse and fanatical; — he cannot relish what there is in it of beautiful, or delicate, or ideal. Men get embarrassed by the common cases of a misguided conscience; but a compass may be out of order as well as a conscience, and the needle may point due south if you hold a powerful magnet in that direction. Still, the compass, generally speaking, is a true and sure guide, and so is the conscience; and you can

Digitized by Google

trace the deranging influence on the latter quite as surely as on the former. Again, there is confusion in some men's minds, who say that, if we so exalt conscience, we make ourselves the paramount judges of all things, and so do not live by faith and obedience. But he who believes his conscience to be God's law, by obeying it obeys God. It is as much obedience, as it is obedience to follow the dictates of God's Spirit; and in every case of obedience to any law or guide whatsoever, there must always be one independent act of the mind pronouncing one determining proposition, 'I ought to obey'; so that in obedience, as in every moral act, we are and must be the paramount judges, because we must ourselves decide on that very principle, 'that we ought to obey.'

"And as for Faith, there is again a confusion in the use of the term. It is not Scriptural, but fanatical, to oppose faith to reason. Faith is properly opposed to sense, and is the listening to the dictates of the higher part of our mind, to which alone God speaks, rather than to the lower part of us, to which the world speaks."

The peculiarities of his theological opinion are referable, no less distinctly than his philosophy, to the depth and clearness of his moral sentiments. It was a necessary consequence of this, that the difference between right and wrong should present itself to him as an *infinite* quantity; that separating the two, there should seem "a great gulf fixed"; that man should appear to range, from his lowest to his highest desires, over an immense interval, and in his extremes of temptation and aspiration to lie apart from himself, far as demon from angel. He felt, with a profound consciousness, the severe and internecine struggle between these two, inevitable to

Digitized by Google

the faithful mind, and understood the whole history of that inner strife, the shame of defeat, the thankfulness of victory. Hence his conceptions both of the Divine Government (including the Christian economy) and of the allotted work of life amount almost to a scheme of Dualism. He looks up, and sees God, in himself, in his Christ, in his Spirit, in all that is holy enough to represent him below, engaged in "putting down moral evil." He looks within, and sees his own soul enlisted, by an articulate and binding call, in the same great warfare. He looks around, and in the constitution and arrangements of the world he sees the well-ordered battle-field, and in the evolutions of history, the marchings and countermarchings of hosts, prepared for the great campaign. One to whom the whole scene of things resolved itself into this aspect could not but enter, with passionate fellow-feeling, into the character of St. Paul; seize, with instinctive apprehension, the great scheme of the Apostle's spiritual Christianity; thrust away, with indignant reason, every priest, every rite, every idol of the fancy, that interposed between him and the Christ in heaven, whose immediate disciple — "by faith, not by sight" — he was, no less than the convert of Damascus, and to whom alone his allegiance was due. In the same spirit he objects to the mere historical Christ of the Unitarians: instead of a being nearly two thousand years off, he needs to feel himself the disciple of one who is living now, and to whose heavenly spirit his own may draw nigh in trustful devotion. In his view of Christ, there is nothing to which, with very slight modification of

Digitized by Google

language, we should not heartily assent. He is regarded, in Arnold's theology, less as the achiever of Redemption, than as *himself a Revelation* of the Divine nature; it was not as the author of binding precepts, or the teacher of new truths, or the exemplar of a good life, but as the *symbol of God's moral perfections*, that he was most dear and holy to this noble heart. Arnold's practical, and little speculative or ideal mind, rendered this view particularly needful for him: God, in himself, — the Absolutely Infinite, — being to his thought inconceivable and unapproachable, a θεὸς ἄῤῥητος, awfully beyond human affections, unless contemplated in some concrete expression of his nature. The cast of Arnold's mind gave him a deep sympathy with the *human* element in the Scriptures; the answer of his quick nature told him, in many a prophet's strain, and many an historic touch, that a man's hand had been there; and his habit of critical examination of the records of antiquity made it impossible for him to overlook the symptoms of origin not infallible in some of the books. Hence he wholly repudiates the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and even speaks of Coleridge's "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," bold as it is, as only the "beginning of the end" on this great subject. He says to Mr. Justice Coleridge: —

"Have you seen your uncle's 'Letters on Inspiration,' which I believe are to be published? They are well fitted to break ground in the approaches to that momentous question which involves in it so great a shock to existing notions; the greatest, probably, that has ever been given since the discovery of the falsehood of the doctrine of the Pope's infalli-

Digitized by Google

bility. Yet it must come, and will end, in spite of the fears and clamors of the weak and bigoted, in the higher exalting, and more sure establishing, of Christian truth." — Vol. I. p. 358.

Nor did he, in relinquishing the literary inspiration, cling fast, as some ineffectually pretend to do, to the personal infallibility of the Apostles, even on matters nearly affecting their own mission and the faith of the early Church: but found it not inconsistent with his unconditional reverence for St. Paul, to acknowledge that he entertained the fallacious expectation of an approaching end of the world.

Condemning the spurious heavenly-mindedness affected by certain religious professors, he says: —

"There are some, Englishmen unhappily, but most unworthy to be so, who affect to talk of freedom and a citizen's rights and duties as things about which a Christian should not care. Like all their other doctrines, this comes out of the shallowness of their little minds, 'understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.' True it is that St. Paul, *expecting that the world was shortly to end*, tells a man not to care even if he were in a state of personal slavery. That is an endurable evil which will shortly cease, not in itself only, but in its consequences. But even *for the few years during which he supposed the world would exist*, he says, 'if thou mayest be free, use it rather.'" — Vol. II. p. 413.

We can imagine, indeed, the consternation with which dogmatical Christians, who must have a belief imposed upon their nature, rather than educed from it, would regard Arnold's free dealings with the authority of Scripture in matters not spiritual.

Digitized by Google

He could not shut his eyes to the manifest traces in the book of Daniel of an origin full as late as the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes; and in proof of the mere historical character of its "pretended prophecies," he adduces, with apparent unconsciousness, the very same arguments which in 1724–1727 brought upon Collins the prolixity of frightened Churchmen and the imputation of secret unbelief. (Vol. II. p. 188.) Perhaps his early study of Geology, under the guidance of Buckland, may have combined with historical criticisms to loosen the hold of the book of Genesis on his mind: we find him, at least, treating the problem as to the origin of mankind from a common stock as an open question, remaining to be decided by physiological and ethnological research; and he is even ready with a theory to meet the case of a plurality of races, and exhibit its harmony with the general analogy of Providence in the education of the world. (Vol. I. p. 371.)

Well may orthodox rigor stand aghast, and think, What then becomes of our Adamic inheritance of corruption, "naturally engendered" in "every man"? of the fatal effects of the fall of our first parents? of the whole scheme for redeeming our last race from its despair? Either Christianity must forego its *universal* character, and be restrained to the tribe of whose progenitors the Mosaic narrative speaks; or its whole economy must be addressed to the actual moral constitution of men, irrespective of their original parentage. It is not for us to satisfy such objections. We have little doubt that Arnold's doctrine of human depravity was, like Coleridge's, a

Digitized by Google

mere expression of the insatiable thirst of his intense moral nature: conscious of a love and desire of goodness far beyond the measure of his best attainment, feeling the interval between the obligations he reverently owned and the life he actually lived, he described this fact, which is human, not personal, by saying that the Will of man is stricken with disease and infirmity, and, without the helping spirit of God, is ill-matched with its acknowledged duties. The entire trust which he reposed on the oracles of Conscience and Reason is further evident from his adoption of Locke's opinion, — which it is the fashion to treat as virtual Anti-supernaturalism, — that "the doctrine must prove the miracle, not miracle the doctrine." On this point he says: —

"You complain of those persons who judge of a Revelation, not by its evidence, but by its substance. It has always seemed to me that its substance is a most essential part of its evidence; and that miracles wrought in favor of what was foolish or wicked, would only prove Manicheism. We are so perfectly ignorant of the unseen world, that the character of any supernatural power can only be judged of by the moral character of the statements which it sanctions; thus only can we tell whether it be a revelation from God, or from the Devil. If his father tells a child something which seems to him monstrous, faith requires him to submit his own judgment, because he knows his father's person, and is sure, therefore, that his father tells it him. But we cannot thus know God, and can only recognize his voice by the words spoken being in agreement with our idea of his moral nature." — Vol. II. p. 221.

All these free and natural movements of his mind

Digitized by Google

on questions the most momentous, are concurrent with a manifest increase in the depth and loftiness of his religious character; a coincidence perfectly intelligible to those who appreciate, as he did, —

"....the great philosophical and Christian truth, which seems to me the very truth of truths, that Christian unity, and the perfection of Christ's Church, are independent of theological articles of opinion; consisting in a certain moral state, and moral and religious affections, which have existed in good Christians of all ages and all communions, along with an infinitely varying proportion of truth and error." — Vol. I. p. 359.

The supremacy of the moral nature in Arnold was so absolute, as to determine all his tastes exclusively towards objects of *real* and of *human* interest. He could never construct a world for himself, of *ideas*, of *images*, of *things;* he must live among *persons*. Metaphysics, Art, Science, had no attractions for him. If he praises Plato, it is the *Phædo* that extorts his admiration, and that chiefly for the *language*. (I. 391.) He does not care for Florence, (I. 304,) and throughout his Continental journeys never mentions even a picture or a statue. He could teach the first six books of Euclid! (II. 206,) and rather than have physical science the principal thing in his son's mind, he "would gladly have him think that the sun went round the earth, and that the stars were so many spangles set in the bright blue firmament." (II. 37.) And where human knowledge occupies the transition territory from *things* to *persons*, viz. in Natural History, or the study of *living things*, he was deterred from entering by the up-

Digitized by Google

rising of imperfect moral sympathies, which could neither be laid asleep nor satisfied: "the whole subject," he said, "of the brute creation is to me one of such painful mystery that I dare not approach it." (II. 348.)

We must tear ourselves away from this delightful companionship with one whose image will henceforth stand in one of the most sacred niches of our memory. His political opinions, amply discussed in Reviews of a different character, we cannot notice. They were in the spirit with all the expressions of his mind: the joint results of a clear-sighted and unconquerable sense of justice and a profound historical wisdom, that, with that moral eye fully open, had read the lives of nations, and connected their punishments with their sins. His occasional faults, his vehement expression of opinion, his severe condemnation of individuals not fairly obnoxious to personal reproach, we feel no desire to draw forth for censure. These things may well pass, without a word, in such a man. It is hard enough to speak with just and wise appreciation of what is noble and great in one to whom we look up through so immeasurable a distance; and one ought in truth to be like him, to show him as he is. *Statuere qui sit sapiens vel maxime videtur esse sapientis.*

Digitized by Google

CHURCH AND STATE.*

[From the Prospective Review for May, 1845.]

THE questions which engage the attention of speculative men often appear to have little connection with the actual affairs of their time: and are regarded, both by those who discuss them and by those who despise them, as mere ideal things, touching at no point the realities amid which they appear. Yet this estimate, invariably made by contemporaries, is as invariably reversed by posterity. In the historical retrospect of any period, the relation between its Thought and Action becomes clear: and its philosophy appears, no less than its poetry, its art, or even its polity, distinctly expressive of its real in-

---

* The Ideal of a Christian Church considered in Comparison with existing Practice. By Rev. W. G. Ward, M. A., Fellow of Baliol College, Oxford. Second Edition. 1844.

The Kingdom of Christ delineated; in Two Essays, on our Lord's own Account of his Person and of the Nature of his Kingdom, and on the Constitution, Powers, and Ministry of a Christian Church, as appointed by Himself. By Richard Whately, D. D., Archbishop of Dublin. 1841.

On the Constitution of the Church and State, according to the Idea of each. By Samuel Taylor Coleridge. 1839.

Fragment on the Church. By Thomas Arnold, D. D., late Head Master of Rugby School. 1844.

Digitized by Google

ternal life. Nay, the very literature which most affects universality is often most deeply stamped with the characteristics of age and race. The genius of a peculiar civilization, slowly and obscurely rising, appears to reach its culminating intensity in its philosophy. Standing at that point of its culture, we occupy the precise meridian from which it looked forth on the universe. What it missed and what it saw, what it loved and what it hated, all its conceptions of truth and all its aspirations after good, are collected there, and so constructed into a systematic whole, as to be apprehensible at a single view. There is nothing more absolutely Hellenic than the Dialogues of Plato, or more distinctively mediæval than the writings of Thomas Aquinas: the England of the Reformation perfected itself in Locke, and the France of the Revolution is reflected in Diderot. He who would thoroughly appreciate the actuating spirit of any period must study, not only the debates of its Senates, but the discussions of its Schools.

In the theories of Society produced by the great masters of thought in ancient and in modern times, we find this remarkable difference: that with the former the grand problem is, to adjust the relations of the State to the Individual; with the latter, of the State to the Church. Yet the change, when rightly interpreted, will appear a change rather of names than of things, and presents us only with two cases of a problem essentially one and the same. No one can suppose that the agency of the *Individual*, so much guarded against in the ideal communities of the Greek philosophers, has vanished from

Digitized by Google

modern society, and carried off the difficulties which its presence was once felt to introduce. Nor is it correct to imagine that the influences which we denote by the word *Church* constitute a new element special to Christian nations, and had not to be taken into account in schemes of ancient polity. They were in truth comprised in the Hellenic idea of the *State;* which was not equivalent, as with us, to the mere aggregate of individual interests in respect to physical good, but represented all those moral ends which transcend personal happiness, and constitute the τελειότατον τέλος of human life. An institution for the protection of "body and goods" would have been considered by Plato as a club of private persons requiring to be strictly watched; or at most as a police organization subsidiary only to the true aims of government: while, on the other hand, the direct training of individual character, the influence over prevailing habits, the maintenance of the highest sentiments, which we consider the proper business of the Church, he claimed as characteristic functions of the public polity. So that, when we look to the principles of human nature operative in each, we find in the modern *State* only the corporate existence of the ancient ἰδιώτης; and in the ancient πόλις the territorial sovereignty of the modern ἐκκλησία. The real subject of controversy is at bottom still the same; as to the proper sphere and limits, in the affairs of men, of Self-will on the one hand and Reverence on the other. That the mere *form* of the question has undergone a change, is a natural consequence of the *new cast* which has been given to the

Digitized by Google

elementary forces of social life. The Greek mythology and worship were, for the most part, *unmoral*, and had little tendency to control the individual will by a sentiment of duty; and to inspire and maintain in a people the sense of a law higher than themselves, philosophers, left at fault by the Temple, looked to the Senate-house. The Christian faith, on the other hand, is in its very essence *moral*, and wherever taken to heart, has established over private life the august rule of conscience. Religion, in its proper sense, having thus gone over from the State to the Individual, has left the functions of the sovereign power in a reduced condition, and made them rather protective of the personal desires, than an encroachment upon them: and hence the modern notion of the purely *negative* office of government, and the limitation of its action to what are called *secular* affairs.

It is easy to understand, when these changes are taken into account, why men whose minds were purely antique — as Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle — regarded the State as wholly *including* all the influences now contained under our word "Church," while men in sympathy with modern ideas — as Warburton and Locke — regard it as wholly *excluding* them; why writers imbued with the wisdom of *both* periods — as Hooker and Arnold — refuse to admit either agency as prohibitive of the other, and therefore pronounce the two spheres of operation absolutely coincident; and why those who engage themselves chiefly wih the *transition* from the Heathen to the Christian civilization should admire, with

Digitized by Google

Mr. Ward, the sacerdotal system of the Middle Ages, which practically leavened the mass of European population with Christian ideas, and should desire to subordinate the human sovereignty of government to the divine supremacy of the Church.

At the present moment we can turn our eyes to no considerable province of Christendom, which is not agitated by the contest, between the State and the Church, for the private life of individuals. There seems to be a general conviction, that the Reformation has developed itself into an excessive self-will; that its maxims have weakened religious unity, and relaxed temporal authority; that the great multitude of men require more systematic guidance, more protection from temptation, more steady help towards a Christian life, than are secured by its methods, ever alternating between the repose of latitudinarian ease, and paroxysms of importunate zeal. That the *let-alone system* is incompetent to the moral management of the new economical conditions under which society exists, is the inference generally drawn from the frightful mass of practical Heathenism existing in the heart of Christian countries. But whether the new and needed power shall be assumed by the sceptre or the cross; whether either can make good its exclusive prerogative, from natural reason, from human prescription, from divine ordination; whether both must concur, and lay aside all mutual jealousy in a work demanding alike the strength of the one and the persuasion of the other, — are questions by which the whole mind of Europe is vehemently moved. Scotland, impatient of the restraints im-

Digitized by Google

posed by the law on its ecclesiastical activity, sets up its Free Church. Ireland, ruled by priests, is tempting the State — too long hated and defied — to seek alliance with the only power through which the functions of government can be recovered. England, ashamed of its neglected population, is agitated by the rival efforts of a repentant legislature and a repentant clergy, aiming to regulate the labor, to abate the ignorance, to elevate the desires of the people, the one by legalized discipline, the other by a sacerdotal police. France, with a Catholic king, whose policy has been indulgent to a clergy long despised, sees its Church unsatisfied, and resolved to dispute with the University the right of control over public instruction. Switzerland becomes the centre of anxious attention to all Europe, while deciding the fate of the Jesuits, to whom Lucerne had intrusted the education of her citizens. And if at Treves another Luther has arisen in the person of Ronge, it is from too bold an attempt to reassert the power of Ultramontane superstition over the Catholics of modern Germany. Everywhere an aggressive action has commenced upon the private elements of society: and usually the civil and ecclesiastical powers appear as competitors for the new influence which is confessedly required. Hence the revived interest in those discussions of polity, which have at all times so much attraction for thoughtful men, and have given occasion to the works of our greatest moralists.

Of the treatises mentioned at the head of this article, only those of Coleridge and Arnold attempt

Digitized by Google

directly to define the relation between the Church and State. The other two are wholly occupied with the internal constitution and proper office of the Christian Church considered by itself. Incidentally, however, a State theory is involved in this narrower discussion: for in proportion as the range of ecclesiastical functions is made to take in more or less of the moral work of society, will less or more remain for the civil power to undertake. Accordingly, there is no difficulty in perceiving that Mr. Ward and Archbishop Whately occupy the opposite extremities of political philosophy as well as of theological system. Their whole conception of human life is so different, that, in dealing with it, temporally or spiritually, each would precisely invert the rules of the other. Whatever the one delights to disparage presents the favorite views of the other; the ideas which the one has lived to expel, it is the highest ambition of the other to restore; and the lessons from Scripture, from history, from science, from reflection, which constitute the characteristic wisdom of the one, are present to the other as a never-failing stock-on-hand of fallacies and follies.

Mr. Ward maintains the world to have been prepared for a divine revelation by the inextinguishable activity of conscience; which has power, even where connected with a feeble will, to maintain a secret sense of danger, or, possibly, an ineffectual sadness of aspiration. He lays the greatest stress on the truths of Natural Religion and the obligations of Natural Law: and regards Christianity as throughout assuming these, and furnishing their supernatu-

Digitized by Google

ral complement. The Church is an institution set up for the divine guidance of men; to alarm, to counsel, to encourage them, to a moral obedience, of which, without such heavenly aid, they will only have a distant and passing dream. Her title to afford this guidance must be sought, not in any mere external credentials, but in her self-evidencing power to the conscience. Hence her discipline must begin with simply taking up the disciple's existing conception of duty, and effecting its realization in his life; and for the acknowledgment of her higher laws, the admission of her doctrines, and the adoption of her characteristic methods of worship, she must rely on the enlargement of moral perception and enrichment of spiritual knowledge which the habits of a holy life invariably bring. What, now, is the nature of the institution to which so great a work is assigned? It consists of a sacerdotal order, holding a mediatorial position between a Holy God and a sinful world; intrusted with certain mystic media, through which alone a reconciling grace can pass; and dispensing the heavenly guidance to those exclusively who will accept the sacramental rites. Thus there is no communion possible between the human conscience and Divine Spirit except through the appointed priesthood; the whole work and strife of penitence, of aspiration, of duty, throughout the earth, is without a benediction unless offered through them. Their office is not simply *spiritual*, — i. e. to deal, by the methods of earnest wisdom, with the *spirit* or moral reason of man; but superhuman and *un*-spiritual, — to hold and to distribute certain *physi-*

Digitized by Google

cal conditions of sanctity, of which they are depositaries, not from the purity of their affections, the clearness of their discernment, and the faithfulness of their wills, but from their standing in an unbroken line of ordination, reaching through the bodies of bishops to the Apostolic age. In addition, however, to their supernatural function of dispensing or withholding the divine grace and forgiveness, they have natural duties of counsel, warning, and compassion to perform. Members of a corporate community, which has gathered to it for eighteen centuries the moral experience of saintly men, and whose archives contain a record of every temptation and sorrow that can befall, and every conquest that can ennoble, the human heart, they have access to the wisdom of ages, and are trained in such familiarity with its stores as to derive from it the discipline and rules suited to every new emergency. In the private confessional they must watch and guide the individual conscience: in public convocation, estimate the duty of classes, regulate the usages of professions, and pronounce on the moralities of empire. Their duties have an immense range over the morals, the discipline, the thought, the government of society. In morals they have a *negative* office, as the stern representatives of the divine abhorrence of evil: and must proclaim the hatefulness of sin by denying the communion, not only to open transgressors, but to the idolaters of wealth and the unconscious slaves of low and unspiritual desires; by excluding from the education of the young every thing at variance with the tastes of a holy mind; by

Digitized by Google

falling on the neck of each softened transgressor, and committing him instantly to the seclusion of some sacred retreat; by the direct training of saints, and holding up in visible contrast with the prevalent pursuit of earthly shadows an order of men wholly dedicated to heavenly realities. To this must succeed the *positive* task of watching over the *duty* of *Christians* in the two related particulars of faith and obedience; preserving perfect uniformity of language, without the slightest allowance of individual discretion, in the statement of doctrine; constantly presenting the historical Christ of the Gospels to the people as their God, who created them one by one, who is closely present with them, and knows their thoughts; and habituating them daily to the phrases expressive of the two great truths of Revelation, — "Three Persons, one God," — "One Person, two Natures." As a *disciplinary* institution, the Church must not only provide a sublime and beautiful ritual, "such as the Spirit himself has suggested to the beloved bride of Christ," but must adapt her methods of influence with versatile skill to the several classes of society. The poor are her especial charge, to whom she must never rest till full justice has been done. Such of their employments as are incompatible with the Christian life she must detect and prohibit. Their oppressors, however powerful, must be sternly denounced. Their day of rest must be guarded, and refreshed by a religious ceremonial invested with every beauty that may touch and solemnize their hearts. The rich, too, must be warned of their temptations, not only by direct resistance and

Digitized by Google

reproof to the desire of wealth, but by examples of cheerful and voluntary poverty. And the educated must be saved from the dangers of corrupt admirations and a mere diabolical acuteness, by imparting in early life the Catholic rather than the Classical idea of heroism; and throughout his course keeping the student closely implicated in habit with the discipline and offices of the Church.

Perhaps the hardest task imposed by Mr. Ward upon his Church is, to maintain supremacy over the *thought* of society. For this end he requires her to create a new literature and philosophy, antagonistic to that which, he complains, the spread and advancement of knowledge has put into the hands of unbelievers. She must find a way of prevailing over the apparent results of the modern criticism and exegesis; must relieve the Old Testament of the difficulties with which historical research painfully oppresses it; must harmonize the Hebrew cosmogony with the discoveries of modern science; and, in order to guide the reaction against the infidel philosophy of the last century, must produce a new system of metaphysics, capable of coping with the subtlety of Protestant analysis, and of giving a scientific basis to the Catholic system. Finally, the influence of the Church over the *body politic* must be obtained, not by aspiring to the direct administration of State affairs, but by proclaiming the application of Christian principles to political government; by denouncing State sins; by guiding the popular eagerness for redress. Nor are more positive interpositions to be avoided. Rules must be made for

Digitized by Google

almsgiving, to correct the cold-hearted morality of economists. It must be authoritatively settled what causes a barrister may plead, — what books a bookseller may distribute. And above all, the education of the people must be undertaken by the Church, and a subsequent control over their habits be maintained, with a special view to counteract the evils, mental and moral, arising from the excessive division of labor. All these duties devolve upon ecclesiastics, not by delegation from the State, but by supernatural appointment from God. Their long neglect is to be deplored with a greater sorrow than for any unfaithfulness towards men: and they are to be resumed with the consciousness of an authority above the law.

From this imperfect sketch of Mr. Ward's "Ideal," it will be evident that, with him, *the Church* is constituted wherever *the clergy* exist: that its *origin* is higher than that of society, and its *rights* beyond the reach of the consentaneous will of men; that the sphere of its power is coextensive with human life, and embraces, therefore, the whole range of the State's activity; that it may not, unless through the law, enforce its claims by the temporal sword, but may cut off offenders from communion with divine mercy; may "declare war in the name of the Lord against wickedness in high worldly places, and draw the spiritual sword which has so long rusted in its scabbard." (p. 437.)

We know of no living writer, of any reputation as a thinker, who has proved so little, and disproved so much, as Archbishop Whately. And on no one

Digitized by Google

of his works is his negative mode of treatment more impressed than on the Essay now before us. We close it with the clearest knowledge of what the kingdom of Christ is *not;* of the powers which its ministers must disown; of the purposes they cannot serve; of the spurious origin of almost every thing that occurs to the mind when the Church system is spoken of, catechisms, creeds, articles, liturgy, sacramental forms, ordination, rubrics, canons, and episcopacy itself. But of any high and holy ends worthy of a divine institution; of any principle of unity connecting its parts into a spiritual whole; of the nature of the vital activity which should pervade the organism of the Church, and its relation to the other forces which determine the phenomena of society, — the faintest possible conception is given. As the temple, with its metropolitan priesthood, is the type of Mr. Ward's Church; so is the municipal synagogue, with its lay officers, of Dr. Whately's. Our Lord determined to gather his disciples after his departure into local societies. In the constitution of these, the practice of the synagogue was naturally followed: for there it was that the Apostolic missionaries first sought a hearing: and if they failed to convince the majority of the assembly, so that the synagogue became a church, the converted minority, on their secession, followed in their new combination the model with which they were familiar. Hence in the earliest Christian communities, the deacons, the presbyters, the bishops, had like duties with the officers of the same designation in a Jewish association of worshippers. The effect of

Digitized by Google

this statement on the pretensions of the ecclesiastical body is evident. The several *societies of disciples* may claim a direct sanction from Christ, since he distinctly provided for their formation; but he took no notice of the *functionaries* who were to administer their affairs; and that they exist at all, arises only from the wants and convenience of the associations which they represent; every society having its officers, its rules, its terms of membership. And as for the particular nature of the offices thus created, *that* grew naturally out of an historical antecedent which cannot possibly impart to it any superhuman authority: for, whatever obscurity hangs over the origin of the Hebrew synagogues, they certainly cannot be referred to the Mosaic law, or to any causes higher than the human will. Hence a Church is a "congregation of faithful men," to which the clergyman is but an appendage, with title depending on his being the "regularly appointed officer of a regular Christian community." Each society, moreover, is as wholly independent of the rest, as the synagogue of Athens from that of Cæsarea; connected indeed by sympathy, and at liberty to establish a federal combination with others; but no longer bound by such organization, when it fails to accomplish its appointed end. The Church has accordingly no unity but in name; it is wholly provincial, and has no visible head, either individual or collective. And whatever range of discretion may be left as to the functions of the clergy, one thing is absolutely excluded by the very religion which they serve: they have no templar and sacerdotal duties, can offer no

Digitized by Google

sacrifice, absolve from no sin, and stand between no man and his God. And even in the prosecution of its legitimate ends, the Church must wholly abstain from secular coercion, as an encroachment on the "things that are Cæsar's," and alien to the spirit of a religion whose "kingdom is not of this world." All temporal sanctions are replaced in Christian societies by the sanctions of the world to come. This it is which, according to Archbishop Whately, constitutes the *spirituality* of the kingdom of Christ. We must protest, in passing, against this prevalent but gross abuse of the word *spiritual*. It does not denote a mere far-sighted self-interest, in opposition to the narrow calculations of a worldly mind; but is the name of a higher order of motive than any prudence, long or short. Action which proceeds from personal hope or fear is wholly unspiritual: the nearness or remoteness of the pleasure or pain contemplated does not alter the moral quality, but only the sagacity, of the agent's determination: he makes an investment, in the one case for a quick return, in the other giving credit on good security; in both the transaction is strictly mercantile. Were this the difference between the foundation of the State and that of the Church, then political society would be like a partnership for prosecuting a home trade with cash payments; while Christian society would resemble a joint-stock company for colonizing some antipodal region, that, after the judicious outlay of years, might yield, not the profits of a shop, but the revenue of a commonwealth. It is the remark of Coleridge, that, whether a "man expects the

Digitized by Google

auto da fe, the fire and fagots, with which he is threatened, to take place at Lisbon or Smithfield, or in some dungeon in the centre of the earth, makes no difference in the kind of motive by which he is influenced; nor of course in the nature of the power which acts on his passions by means of it." * That influence alone is spiritual which awakens the consciousness of obligation and the sentiments of worship.

To sum up, then, the leading particulars of Archbishop Whately's theory. The end of the Church is to enforce the moral law, as recognized among Christians, by the sanctions of a future life. The end of the State is the protection of person and property by the use of temporal sanctions. In both cases the institutions derive their existence from the component members, over whom the functionaries have no authority beyond that which belongs to regular official appointment. And all questions as to the internal organization of the Church, the mode of supporting its cost, and of adjusting its relations to the secular government, are open to determination by regard to expediency, provided coercion, priesthood, and a visible head be altogether disclaimed.

In one important respect Dr. Arnold occupies an intermediate position between the two writers already noticed. In his design of a Church Mr. Ward labors for Christendom, Archbishop Whately for a congregation, Arnold for a nation. The Christians of this realm constitute, in the view of the first, only

* Church and State, p. 134.

Digitized by Google

an integrant part of one vast *civitas*, conscious of its unity; in that of the second, an aggregate of particular communities, forming together a local *societas*, unconscious of its unity, but collected into a class by observers from without; in that of the third, one entire and independent *civitas* among many within the wide circuit of the Christian *societas* throughout the world. This peculiarity, like every other in Arnold's theory, is singularly expressive of the character of his mind. It was not simply his historical taste, or his love of Aristotle, that led him to identify the functions of Church and State, and seek in Christianity the bond of citizenship to replace the ancient ties of race. Hooker, so induced, had done the same; — with the significant difference, that he neither hated a priesthood, nor appreciated the Puritans. Arnold's all-prevailing moral nature made him seize with avidity, from every age, all the securities for human duty which genius had devised or inspiration imparted; and reject with indignation every counterfeit pretending to do the sterling work of a responsible will. He could not, for all his faith in revelation, forego one jot of the ancient reverence for law; or, for all his high doctrine of obedience, allow the priest to touch with one of his fingers the burden of individual obligation. He would save government from degenerating into police, and Christianity into conjuring; and he had an unconquerable aversion to accept the constable as representative of the State, or the bishop of the Church. Both institutions were to him but incorporated expressions of the *conscience* of their members; — the one of its

Digitized by Google

executive energy, the other of its meditative aspirations; neither, therefore, having an aim less or more comprehensive than the other; neither complete and healthy without the other; and requiring, in order to effectuate the ends of either, their coalescence into a living unity. The "Fragment on the Church" contends, no less strenuously and successfully than the "Essay on the Kingdom of Christ," against a sacerdotal system, and subordinates the ministry to the "congregation of faithful men": yet with the difference that Dr. Whately seems to be stripping the clergy of their pretensions; Dr. Arnold, to be distributing to the laity their duties: the one, impatient for the abatement of nonsense; the other, unhappy at the usurpation of a trust. Apart, however, from this characteristic difference of feeling, there is a perfect accordance between the two friends in their negative conclusions, as to the internal constitution of the Church. Nothing whatever, according to Arnold, is *instituted*, except that the disciples shall form themselves into communities, for mutual help in duty, in the same way as mere society is an aid in civilization. It is a thing authoritatively settled, that there shall be this divine polity of coöperation, for bringing the faith of Christ to the *masses* of men, and remedying the *extent* of the Fall, as individual devotedness countervails its *intensity*. But as to the modes by which this association shall conduct its contest against moral evil, and the scheme of organization by which its parts shall be maintained in active unity, all is left open to the discretion of successive ages. On this point his language is most unqualified:—

Digitized by Google

"In matters of doctrine, an opinion, however unimportant, is either true or false; and if false, he who holds it is in error, although the error may be so practically indifferent as to be of no account in our estimate of the men. But in matters of government, I hold that there is actually no right and no wrong. Viewed in the large, as they are seen in India, and when abstracted from the questions of particular countries, I hold that one form of Church government is exactly as much according to Christ's will as another; nay, I consider such questions as so indifferent, that, if I thought the government of my neighbor's Church better than my own, I yet would not, unless the case were very strong, leave my Church for his, because habits, associations, and all those minor ties which ought to burst asunder before a great call, are yet of more force, I think, than a difference between Episcopacy and Presbytery, unless one be very good of its kind, and the other very bad." — *Life*, Vol. II. p. 105.

The only material point on which Arnold dissented from the opinions expressed in Whately's Essays was the right of the Church to wield the temporal sword. And this, as it appears to us, was a difference more in words than in reality, and resolved itself into the question, whether the power which enforced the laws in a Christian country should be *called* the State or the Church. Arnold was as far as his friend from claiming coercive prerogatives for either ecclesiastical officers or worshipping assemblies: all judicial and executive authority he would leave where now it rests: only he would regard the functionaries who exercise it as deputed, not by the material interests, but by the moral sense of the community, and standing for the law of

Digitized by Google

Christ by which all are bound. This ascription of a sacred character to authorized and constitutional rulers is all that Arnold meant by his desire to make "the Church a sovereign society." He wanted, not more power to the Church, but a more Christian temper to the State. He could not endure that any part of life should escape the reach of obligation; that the process of social organization should be thought to give rise, at any step, to relations exempt from moral inspection; that any voluntary deeds between citizen and citizen, between subjects and rulers, between the commonwealth and foreign states, should be treated as less amenable to the divine rule of conscience, than the private conduct which is abandoned wholly to its sway. Hence he was impatient of the false distinction between "secular" and "spiritual" things; under cover of which he believed that countless questionable ways of thought and act passed without a just verdict, or even an inquiring challenge, and whole provinces of life were ceded as irreclaimable for Christian cultivation. He felt how untruly this distinction presents the real difference between the pursuit of physical and that of moral good, as if they were each a separate business, to be achieved in society by different agents, in individuals by different acts. As in the case of private persons there are not two sets of employments, one irresponsibly abandoned to the natural desires, the other the exclusive realm of duty; but moral good consists in the regulated pursuit of natural good according to a divine and holy law: so in communities there are not two spheres of work and office,

Digitized by Google

one with only physical ends, the other with only spiritual; but all parts of the body politic must serve one supreme intent, viz. that the whole natural life of society shall also be a moral life. Arnold, accordingly, with adventurous nobleness, insisted on carrying the Christian standard through every department of the state: sovereign and council, judges and ministers, legislators and magistrates, were to regard themselves as functionaries of a Christian church. Nay, he did not shrink from applying his principle to the province of government most difficult to reduce under the rule of truth, honesty, and justice, — we mean, the foreign relations of the commonwealth. He had no idea of leaving, in diplomacy, a privileged nest of retreat for chicanery and fraud; or in war itself, a licensed escape from moral obligation. In all questions between nation and nation, in the conduct of all disputes, and the resistance of aggression, there actually *exists* a right and a wrong: and is it for Christian men to throw up these things in confusion and despair, and bid conscience turn the back till they have scrambled through a crisis they cannot manage by her rules? He was not to be scared, therefore, by any amount of Machiavellian practice, from including ambassadors, army, and navy in the staff of his national Church. They were all instruments in that contest with moral evil, and pressure towards the highest good, which formed the true ἔργον of every Christian community, and must share alike the responsibility and the dignity of their association with such a work. Arnold would have heartily adopted his favorite Aristotle's estimate of

Digitized by Google

the religious character of wise and thoughtful sway, when he identified the rule of reason and law in states with the authority of God, and said that, to allow scope for the unregulated will of governors, was to give power to the brute.* Of this sentiment, indeed, the following passage from the "Fragment" is little more than a Christian amplification: —

"It is obvious that, the object of Christian society being thus extensive, and relating not to ritual observances, but to the improvement of the whole of our life, the natural and fit state of the Church is, that it should be a sovereign society or commonwealth; as long as it is subordinate and municipal, it cannot fully carry its purposes into effect. This will be evident, if we consider that law and government are the sovereign influences on human society; that they in the last resort shape and control it at their pleasure; that institutions depend on them, and are by them formed and modified; that what they sanction will ever be generally considered innocent; that what they condemn is thereby made a crime, and if persisted in becomes rebellion; and that those who hold in their hands the power of life and death must be able greatly to obstruct the progress of whatever they disapprove of; and those who dispose of all the honors and rewards of society must, in the same way, be greatly able to advance whatever they think excellent. So long, then, as the sovereign society is not Christian, and the Church is not sovereign, we have two powers alike designed to act upon the whole of our being, but acting often in opposition to each other. Of these powers, the one has

* Ὁ μὲν οὖν τὸν νοῦν κελεύων ἄρχειν δοκεῖ κελεύων ἄρχειν τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τοὺς νόμους, ὁ δ' ἄνθρωπον κελεύων προστίθησι καὶ θηρίον. —Polit. III. 16.

Digitized by Google

wisdom, the other external force and influence; and from the division of these things, which ought ever to go together, the wisdom of the Church cannot carry into effect the truths which it sees and loves; whilst the power of government, not being guided by wisdom, influences society for evil rather than for good. The natural and true state of things then is, that this power and this wisdom should be united: that human life should not be pulled to pieces between two claimants, each pretending to exercise control over it, not in some particular portion, but universally; that wisdom should be armed with power, power guided by wisdom; that the Christian Church should have no external force to thwart its beneficent purposes; that government should not be poisoned by its internal ignorance or wickedness, and thus advance the cause of God's enemy, rather than perform the part of God's vicegerent." — Ch. I. p. 10.

It is impossible, in reading this passage, not to be reminded of the well-known saying of Plato, that there can be no cessation of ills to states, or, generally, to the human race, unless either philosophers become their kings, or their so-called kings and rulers become true philosophers; and unless such a coalescence takes place between political power and philosophic wisdom, that natures devoted to either, at the expense of the other, are for the most part expressly excluded from public affairs.* To Arnold, "so natu-

* Ἐὰν μὴ ἢ οἱ φιλόσοφοι βασιλεύσωσιν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, ἢ οἱ βασιλῆς τε νῦν λεγόμενοι καὶ δυνάσται φιλοσοφήσωσι γνησίως τε καὶ ἱκανῶς, καὶ τοῦτο εἰς ταὐτὸν ξυμπέσῃ, δύναμίς τε πολιτικὴ καὶ φιλοσοφία, τῶν δὲ νῦν πορευομένων, χωρὶς ἐφ' ἑκάτερον αἱ πολλαὶ φύσεις ἐξ' ἀνάγκης ἀποκλεισθῶσιν, οὐκ ἔστι κακῶν παῦλα, ὦ φίλε Γλαύκων, ταῖς πόλεσι, δοκῶ δὲ οὐδὲ τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ γένει. — De Rep. V. c. 18.

Digitized by Google

ral was the union of religion with justice, that (he thought) we may boldly deem there is neither, where both are not." * And he held to the conclusion so impressively stated by Hooker: —

"Seeing, therefore, it doth thus appear that the safety of all estates dependeth upon religion; that religion unfeignedly loved perfecteth men's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth; that men's desire in general is to hold no religion but the true; and that whatsoever good effects do grow out of *their* religion who embrace, instead of the true a false, the roots thereof are sparks of the light of truth, intermingled with the darkness of error, — because no religion can wholly and only consist of untruths, — we have reason to think that all true virtues are to honor true religion as their parent, and all well-ordered commonweals to love her as their chiefest stay." — *Eccl. Pol.*, B. 5, § 1.

The views of Arnold, as to the perfect identity of aim in Church and State, set him directly at variance with the philosophy of his political party, and the theology of his ecclesiastical order. He could keep no terms with Warburton's principle, generally received by the Whigs, that —

"It was the care of the bodies, not the souls, of men that the magistrate undertook to give account of. Whatever, therefore, refers to the body is in his jurisdiction; whatever to the soul is not." — *Alliance between Church and State*, B. 1, Ch. 4.

He maintained that, if this were so, the State could not be a "*sovereign* society"; inasmuch as there would be interests above its reach, and exempt

* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, B. 5, § 1.

Digitized by Google

from its command; and that, as there is such a thing as spiritual good, which, in the form of personal perfection, constitutes the highest end of individuals, so can nothing less than this good, in the form of a moral civilization, present a true aim for the collective will of a community. He therefore regarded every thing as within the province of the State, which might elevate the life of its people; and held it the duty of government to provide for their education, to afford expression for their worship, to superintend the construction of their dwellings and the organization of their towns, and to control, with a view to moral results, the distribution of employments which might arise from the unrestrained operation of economical laws. While he separated himself thus from "the liberals," by asserting for the commonwealth higher aims than corporeal, he stood almost alone among ecclesiastics in denying to Christianity any function that was ritual. Religion and government met on the common ground of *moral* life, — the life of responsible *man*, not of a sentient creature on the one hand, or of a magical saint on the other. In short, from both extremities he dismissed all *physical* ends, simply as such; whether of the *zoölogical* kind, giving animal ease for this world, or of the *theological* kind, providing an enchanted safety for the next. His theory would have been complete and self-consistent, if he could have adhered to his conception of the purely moral character of Christianity; and asked for no more, in his definition of a disciple, than a certain state of the conscience and affections. But this was

Digitized by Google

impossible. Dealing with the Newmanites, he boldly vindicates a spiritual Gospel against a *ceremonial*. Dealing with Unitarians, he cannot allow a spiritual Gospel against a *doctrinal*. And were it even otherwise, the difficulty of managing this new ingredient of *belief* cannot be overcome. Do what you will to give exclusive prominence to the *moral* element of Christianity, still, when all that is "sacramental" is cancelled, and the minimum of creed is spared, it does not become identical with the law of conscience; it requires assent to some things not necessarily obvious to every man of good and honest heart; there is yet a residue of certain *historical* propositions to be embraced, to impose which as a condition of citizenship is certainly to exceed your prerogative as guardian of the moral life of the community. Arnold did not shrink from the practical consequences of his own scheme; he strenuously advocated the application of a theological test as a means of discriminating aliens from citizens; he resisted the removal of the Jewish disabilities; he wished to enforce a Scriptural examination in the London University; he "would thank Parliament for having done away with distinctions between Christian and Christian," but "would pray that distinctions be kept up between Christians and non-Christians." * He struggled hard, but, in our opinion, ineffectually, to reconcile this adoption of a State creed with his principle that "union of action," not "union in belief," should constitute the social bond.

* Life, Vol. II. p. 32.

Digitized by Google

In one mood, he maintained that every society "has a right to *establish its own ideas*";* but if so, it "chooses for its end truth, rather than good," — the very thing which he emphatically condemns.† At another time, he denies that the reception of Christianity implies any belief in "the truth of a proposition," and treats it as a purely practical allegiance, which any man may render at will, to a law of conduct; and in defence of this position, he adduces the example of the early Christians, among whom were some members "not even believing that there would be a resurrection of the dead." Then, if so, with what consistency could Dr. Arnold draw up a creed for the express purpose of defining the amount of belief sufficient to make a British citizen? He protests against Mr. Gladstone's doctrine, that the propagation and maintenance of "religious truth" are to be admitted among the proper ends of government; and considers himself as defending the very different proposition, that "man's highest perfection" should be the final aim of the State.‡ But by including among the indispensable elements of human "perfection" a certain portion of "religious," and even historical "truth," he borrows the fundamental principle of the very theory he confutes, and lays himself open to every objection which can be brought against it, except as to the *extent* of its exclusiveness. There is not a consequence deducible

* Life, Vol. II. p. 38.

† Lectures on Modern History, Vol. I., Appendix, p. 50.

‡ Ibid., p. 52.

Digitized by Google

from Mr. Gladstone's scheme, as to the treatment of dissidents, which does not equally follow from Dr. Arnold's, — with only the difference, that the sufferers are less numerous. The revival of a test-act, the enforcement of the law of religious libel, the punishment of active heresy as lawless disaffection, are direct practical corollaries from a theory which inserts the New Testament among the statutes at large, and commits the estates of the realm to the maintenance of its authority in faith and practice. The truth is, Arnold's free and true nature led him to adopt in feeling the moral and affectionate conception of Christianity, as a simple aspiration towards the ideal of character presented in its records. But when, no longer reposing in the interior of this conception, he attempted to reach its boundary, and determine the *external* relations of the religion, he found that his definition must take in certain elements of theological *belief;* and what was meant to discriminate good from evil turned out to be the old barrier between orthodox and heretic.

Such was the snare by which Arnold's divinity contrived to trip up his philosophy. That he fell into it is the more remarkable, because, in a work to which he frequently refers, Coleridge had set a signal example of its avoidance. The three writers whom we have already analyzed have treated, under the name "*Church*," exclusively of the organization of *Christian* communities. To these they have referred the whole spiritual work of society, and have omitted all notice of any other possible forms which may be assumed by the agents of the higher culture of

Digitized by Google

man. Accordingly, in defining the proper constitution of these agencies, their final appeal has been to Scripture and ecclesiastical experience; with their several methods of skill they have extracted a model thence, and never doubted that this would meet the exigencies of all commonwealths worthy to attract our speculations. This assumption, however natural to divines, is not satisfactory to the philosopher. He cannot but remember that human nature is older, and human population more widely spread, than Christianity; that one race, one half of the authentic annals, and one third of the present numbers of mankind, exhaust all that is characteristic of Christendom; that the religion itself, as a social element, is but one phenomenon of that Mind and Conscience which governed life in the times of Abraham and Zoroaster, of Solon and Confucius, of Socrates and Numa, of Cato and Cratippus, no less than in those of Cyprian, Gregory, and Luther. In constructing a system of social philosophy, a securer and a wider basis must be laid than can be found in the historical phenomena, however instructive, of a particular period, however extended: and the foundation sought in the elementary tendencies and inherent instincts of that human nature which runs through all periods, and produces all histories. Coleridge has not precisely done this; but he has raised himself far above the ecclesiastical point of view. He has evolved his "Idea" of a Church from a survey of nations so vast that Christianity appears as only one of many religions illustrating its application. In the practice of the Semitic race on the one hand, and of

Digitized by Google

the Kelts, Scandinavians, and Goths on the other, he finds a principle involved, by which at once to justify the existence and to try the efficiency of a National Church. All these tribes, constituting the *stirps generosa seu historica* of the world, divided the land of each country which they occupied into two portions, neither of which were to be abandoned as possessions to arbitrary self-will, apart from all *duties* attached as conditions of enjoyment. One of these portions comprised the *heritable* lots, or *propriety*, whose fiduciary character implied only private obligations, necessarily left in detail to the conscience of the individual, but secretly watched over by the conscience of the community. The other constituted a *nationality*, or inalienable reserve for perpetual income, in which only life-interests were allowed, conditional on the performance of certain official services.* The purpose of this public endowment was to provide for that higher culture of the citizens, without which civilization can make no advance, and even enjoy no stability. The end was to be obtained by the maintenance in perpetuity of a *clerisy*, — not constituting a priesthood, or dedicated to either ritual or doctrinal offices, but furnishing, first, a class of students for enlarging the range of

* It will occur to some of our readers that a similar bi-partition of the land is recommended by Aristotle; the public rents being applied to the expenses of government, the public meals (serving in part the purpose of a poor-rate), and the *maintenance of public worship*. Τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς δαπανήματα κοινὰ πάσης τῆς πόλεώς ἐστιν. ἀναγκαῖον τοίνυν εἰς δύο μέρη διῃρῆσθαι τὴν χώραν, καὶ τὴν μὲν εἶναι κοινὴν, τὴν δὲ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν. — Polit. VII. 10.

Digitized by Google

knowledge; next, a class of instructors for effecting its distribution.

"A certain smaller number were to remain at the fountain-heads of the humanities, in cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science; being likewise the instructors of such as constituted, or were to constitute, the remaining more numerous classes of the order. The members of this latter, and far more numerous body, were to be distributed throughout the country, so as not to leave even the smallest integral part or division without a resident guide, guardian, and instructor; the objects and final intention of the whole order being these, — to preserve the stores and to guard the treasures of past civilization, and thus to bind the present with the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of knowledge which was indispensable both for the understanding of those rights, and for the performance of the duties correspondent; finally, to secure for the nation, if not a superiority over the neighboring states, yet an equality at least, in that character of general civilization, which, equally with, or rather more than, fleets, armies, and revenue, forms the ground of its defensive and offensive power." — *Church and State*, Ch. V. p. 46.

The true end for which this educated and educating class is created, and that on which alone the State has a right to insist, is the training of citizens in the essentials of the social character, — the diffusion among the people of "legality, that is, the obligations of a well-calculated self-interest, under

Digitized by Google

the conditions of a common interest determined by common laws." (p. 58.) The provisions for this national culture may be wholly detached from the institutions of the Christian Church: they vested, among the Hebrews, in the Levites, among the Kelts, in the Druids, before Christendom existed: and in countries of mixed religions, either receiving the advance or witnessing the retreat of Christianity, they could not be identified with an ecclesiastical system having only partial contact with the people. In some respects they have to accomplish more, in others vastly less, than falls within the province of the Church of Christ upon the same spot; — *more*, inasmuch as they must include the support, not of theology and morals alone, but of all the sciences, not omitting those which sustain the *lay* professions of law and medicine; — *less*, because they are content with forming good subjects for the commonwealth, and stop short of the high aim at perfection through the whole inner and outer life of individuals. The functions, therefore, of the national clerisy are truly distinct from those of the Christian clergy: and in relation to the Church of the body politic, "Christianity is a *blessed accident*, a providential boon." (p. 59.) Whether, the functions being different, the functionaries can ever with advantage be the same, must depend on historical conditions present in one age, absent in another. The circumstances under which Christian institutions developed themselves in the earlier period of English history, rendered them in every way the fittest depositaries of the national trust. They were the

Digitized by Google

centres of all the intellectual and spiritual light which ages of violence had left unquenched. No physical science, no mental skill, no moral art, had yet disengaged itself from their fostering shelter. They comprehended —

"All the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological. The last was indeed placed at the head of all; and of good right did it claim the precedence. But why? Because, under the name of theology or divinity were contained the interpretation of languages, the conservation and tradition of past events, the momentous epochs and revolutions of the race and nation, the continuation of the records, logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science, in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and last, the ground-knowledge, the *prima scientia* as it was named, — philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas." — p. 49.

At a time when the Christian Church *in* the nation failed of no function appropriate to the Clerisy *of* the nation, ecclesiastics were naturally taken as the Officiaries also of the national Church. That they were ministers of a religion which, besides securing the civil ends, went on to accomplish something more and better, did not disqualify them for their State trust. It is only needful that their work should *comprise* an instruction of the people in legal obligations.

"Whatever of higher origin and nobler and wider aim the ministers of the national Church, in some other capacity, and in the performance of other duties, might labor to im-

Digitized by Google

plant and cultivate in the minds and hearts of their congregations and seminaries, should include the practical consequences of the legality above mentioned. The State requires that the basin should be kept full, and that the stream which supplies the hamlet and turns the mill, and waters the meadow-fields, should be fed and kept flowing. If this be done, the State is content, indifferent for the rest, whether the basin be filled by the spring in its first ascent, and rising but a hand's-breadth above the bed; or whether, drawn from a more elevated source, shooting aloft in a stately column, that reflects the light of heaven from its shaft, and bears the *Iris, cæli decus, promissumque Jovis lucidum* on its spray, it fills the basin in its descent." — p. 59.

The fitness, however, of the ecclesiastical body for the State task confided to them diminished in proportion as their power assumed more prominently a sacerdotal character, and their influence was exerted rather on the superstitious fears, than on the reason and conscience, of the people. When at length they lost all patriotic ties, and merely resided on the land, as members of a cosmopolitan priesthood under allegiance to a foreign head, the grossest abuses of trust occurred. Large portions of the heritable lands of the country were absorbed into the Nationalty, by bequests dictated in ghostly fear: and, on the other side, masses were sacrilegiously alienated from the Nationalty by those who were only its life-trustees. The true "Idea" of the English Reformation — though never worked out — was to right the balance thus disturbed, and to reimpose upon the clergy the neglected conditions

Digitized by Google

required of them as functionaries of the commonwealth. The Nationalty should accordingly have been allotted to the maintenance, (1.) of the Universities, and great schools of liberal learning; (2.) of a pastor or parson (*persona*, exemplar of the personal character) in every parish; (3.) of a schoolmaster in every parish, — who might succeed to the pastorate; (4.) of the poor, from age or sickness; (5.) of the Church and School buildings. How far the miserably imperfect results of the Reformation in England constitute an unfitness in the Church of England for any longer performing the duties of the National Clerisy, Coleridge nowhere declares his opinion. Writing with a special reference to the Catholic Emancipation Act, he enumerates only the disqualifications for this trust peculiar to the Roman priests, viz. allegiance to a foreign power, and compulsory celibacy, in connection with an anti-national head. But his principles manifestly imply that the State may at any time vest the Nationalty in the body of men — be they who they may — best fitted to realize its proper ends; and if, from changes either in themselves, or in the community around them, the Clergy no longer represent and guide the intellect and conscience of the nation at large, either new orders of Educators may be added to them as the complement of their defects, or they may be wholly discarded in favor of a Clerisy of lay-instructors.

The utter contempt of "vested interests," and even disregard of individuals, in contemplation of the public weal, which marked this conception of the

Digitized by Google

Church, are no less apparent in Coleridge's Theory of the State. He looks upon society, not in Arnold's way, as composed of *persons*, but as a combination of *class interests and tendencies;* while the persons change, like the atoms of an animate body, these, like its essential organs, remain through all its growth and activity, and constitute the functional powers, whose deranged or concentaneous operation determines the death or life of communities. He resolves the total well-being of a State into two elementary interests, — that of *Permanence*, represented by the landed property of a country, held (1.) by the Major Barons or Peers; (2.) by the Minor Barons or Gentry: and that of *Progression*, represented by its Personalty, under the several heads of, (1.) the manufacturing people in towns; (2.) the commercial, in ports; (3.) the distributive; (4.) the professional. The negative end of all the activity of the State is, to guard the interests and concerns of the whole Proprietage, whether landed or personal; and even the protection of life and limb is an object of care only in so far as it is involved in this. But when this negative end has been attained, there still "remain its positive ends: (1.) to make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual; (2.) to secure to each of its members the hope of bettering his own condition or that of his children; (3.) the development of those faculties which are essential to his humanity, that is, to his rational and moral being."* It is evident from this that, in his

* Lay Sermons, p. 415.

Digitized by Google

estimate of the proper functions of a State, Coleridge occupies an intermediate position between Whately and Arnold; embracing within its ends more than the negative system of the former, and less than the full Christian Polity of the latter. While he would not restrain the State to a mere work of police, he does not require it to become an instrument and help to the special perfecting of private life, demanding of it, not "those degrees of intellectual cultivation which distinguish man from man in the same civilized society, but those only that raise the civilized man above the barbarian, the savage, and the brute."* Arnold nowhere gives us, so far as we remember, a hint of any thing which his State, *alias* Church, can *not* do: he affirms everywhere that it covers the whole ground of human life: no portion of the energy of individuals is left afloat for independent action; but all is merged into the organization of the body politic or the body ecclesiastic. Coleridge, on the other hand, declares it essential to the well-being of the commonwealth, that there should be a reserve of latent power in the hands of individuals, and that this shall be maintained in due proportion to the embodied power of the State. He deprecates the loss of individuality which takes place in absolute monarchies and in absolute republics, — in the one case by autocratic annihilation, in the other by democratic absorption of private characteristics: and justly refers the practical freedom of the English people to the fact that

* Lay Sermons, p. 415.

Digitized by Google

they have *not delegated their whole power* to the Parliament and sovereign. This point secured, there is but one other condition on which the healthy action of the State depends; viz. that there be a due proportion between the *real social influence* of its several classes and interests, and their *recognized political power*. If the Permanent and Progressive elements have their relative forces adjusted in one way in society, and in quite another in the legislature; if any class has risen into possession of influential wealth, without admission into the public franchises; or if intellect and skill obtain direct entrance to administrative offices, without any of the securities afforded by cognizable possession; this rule is violated, and the equilibrium of social functions is disturbed. It may be observed, however, that where the conditions of well-being in communities seem to be hopelessly absent, a spontaneous compensation takes place, till the requisite element has had time to unfold itself. Thus Coleridge himself remarks, that while the *Progressive* interest in our own country lay yet undeveloped, the Church in a great degree performed its functions and supplied its place; counteracting feudal tyranny and relaxing the severity of vassalage; holding forth the benefits of knowledge and the means of future civilization; and, by opening in its monasteries an asylum for fugitive dependents and oppressed franklins, becoming the nursery of towns. We would add, that at this moment a striking illustration of the same principle of compensation is working itself out before our eyes. It is undeniable that among the disorders of our English

Digitized by Google

State we must reckon it not the least, that the *Progressive* interest has not political power at all in proportion to its free life and energy in society; and that the "clear and effectual majority of the lower House," provided for it in the theory of the Constitution, has been shifted into the opposite scale. Of this disorder the obstinate maintenance of the corn-laws and the game-laws are the plainest and most irritating symptom. But who can fail to observe the healthy natural tendency of this incorrespondency to right itself? The elements which have hitherto composed the *Permanent* interest are manifestly undergoing dissolution. The *landed* influence has for ages included both the *owners* and the *occupiers* of the soil: and to regard them otherwise than as one body would have been considered, a century ago, a sign of ignorance and folly. And so it might have continued, had the *fiduciary* character of landed possession never been forgotten, and had not a course of cupidity and ambition on the part of the owners reduced the cultivators to a state of dependence and uncertainty, without any enduring stake in the fields of their own tillage. But this very dependence, this precarious tendency, converts them into mere traders; makes the principles of commercial exchange not only applicable (which of course they must always be) to the produce of their toil, but paramount with them over every feeling which might otherwise have continued to determine their political associations. They are accordingly undergoing a transference from the *landed* to the *personal* interest; learning to regard themselves as mere capi-

Digitized by Google

talists; and acquiring the feelings, the notion of rights, the estimate of duties, which characterize that class. This we consider to be one of the most momentous social changes of our own time: the remoter consequence of which may be, when a system of long leases has restored the feeling of independence, to shift the *Progressive* movement of society, now dangerously limited to town populations, back among a rural yeomanry, ruled in their political aspirations by a sterling and steady sense of justice, rather than by the capricious and self-willed notions of liberty that are apt to impel the city multitudes.

We refrain from following Coleridge through his historical illustrations of his theory, from the development of the constitutional powers of the British commonwealth. What has been said will suffice to present his system of thought in comparison with Arnold's; over which it seems to us to possess two prime advantages. On the civil side, it gives a more precise and practicable definition of the proper functions of the State, and removes the negative doctrine, not by verbal arguments about "a sovereign society," but by furnishing a positive substitute. On the religious side, it has the unique merit of wholly separating the National from the Christian Church: thus vindicating the principle of public endowment for the higher culture of the nation, without implicating it with theological disputes; imposing no confession of faith as a condition of citizenship; requiring no legal definition of Christian essentials; and keeping the staff of government officiaries aloof from controversies between Episcopacy and Presby-

Digitized by Google

tery, Priests and Preachers. It is curious that Arnold, with his wide historical view, with his interest in modern colonization, with his epistolary connections in many lands, should have failed to perceive the utter impracticability of his theory in such an empire as that of Great Britain. With Indians and half-castes in Canada, with Pagan aborigines in New Zealand and Australia, with Hottentots at the Cape, with the Buddhists of Ceylon, the Parsees of Bombay, the Brahmins of Bengal, and Jews everywhere, embraced within the sovereignty of England, how is it possible to make the profession of Christianity a requisite for political rights and civil offices? It is vain to thrust these vast territories out of sight, and construct a theory that shall be bounded by the British seas. Ecclesiastical and educational institutions, direct ramifications from those at home, already exist in all our dependencies: an administrative system pervades them all: and the relation of the natives to these cannot be an external one: wealth, character, intelligence, — all the elements of social influence, — must not be disowned in behalf of religious exclusion; and once admitted as trusted functionaries of colonial governments, they surely are not to be held disqualified by creed from serving the imperial. The difficulties of Arnold's theory are great enough in England; when it is carried to the offsets from English power, it vanishes in impossibilities. Yet, widely as methods of government must be diversified with the populations to which they are applied, a political philosophy ought surely to reach some fundamental principles which underlie

Digitized by Google

them all, and to enable the widest and most various empire to preserve a characteristic unity.

We are unwilling to try our readers' patience by needlessly extending a discussion which, from the compressed form it unavoidably assumes, occasions, we fear, an unwelcome strain upon their attention. Yet we cannot close without indicating, in some imperfect way, the course of reflection by which, as we conceive, these great questions of Polity may be brought to a successful issue. We are satisfied that no test can be applied to the several competing systems of our day, — that no sound guidance can be obtained even through the confusion of the Maynooth debate, — without adverting to the first principles of political society. Almost all the ecclesiastical schemes of our times seem to us well-reasoned from the premises they severally assume. The voluntaryism of the Independents, the Catholicism of Mr. Ward, the Establishment scheme of Warburton and Mr. Macaulay, the National endowment of Coleridge and Chalmers, are all admirably defended, and command the assent of those who can take their first step without hesitation. But here is the difficulty. To us they seem to set out with Scriptural interpretations, or Apostolic parallels, or historical predilections, or ethical maxims, or party phrases, or rules of expediency, of the most unreal and questionable kind; to which, at all events, we find no correspondent conviction; and before and beyond which we must search for the point of divergence of these different systems. Our real clew must be found in the principles of human nature

Digitized by Google

that give rise to Church and State, — Religion and Government; — principles, of which all historical precedents, and even Christianity itself, as a *received* faith and source of social phenomena, are but the results; and without reference to which only a blind and empirical use can be made of the lessons of the past.

An origin has been sought for the social existence of man in the weakness of the isolated individual, and the necessity of union for purposes of self-defence. The manifest objections to this view, familiar as they have been made by the reasonings of Aristotle and Cicero against it, have not prevented its frequent reappearance.* A general preference, however, has been given to the theory which refers the formation of communities to the affectionate propensities of our race; and this account of the original social bond has received the sanction of Aristotle.† But it appears evident that the relation of mutual equality which would ensue from the mere sentiment of attachment (φιλία), and which Aristotle himself points out as its consequence, is not that which binds together the most elementary human societies. A principle of *subordination* seems essential even to the very idea of a group brought into permanent unity. This principle is to be found, we believe, in the characteristics of man as a *moral* being, and would be wholly absent if he were made

* See Say's Cours Complet d'Economie Politique, p. 544; and Sismondi's Fall of the Roman Empire, Chap. I. p. 2.

† Polit. III. i. 9.

Digitized by Google

up of animal instincts, adaptive understanding, and sympathetic affections. These characteristics are two: a self-consciousness with respect to the various principles of action which impel him, attended by an intuitive perception of their relative worth; and a causal power to act in accordance with this perception. The former is what is usually termed Conscience; the latter, Will. These attributes constituting the true human distinctions, he who manifests them in the highest degree is regarded as the most perfect man. Within the limits of our own consciousness, a higher principle of action cannot occur to us as practicable, while we are under solicitation from a lower, without our feeling its *right* over us; nor can we imagine the *effort* made to serve its bidding, without a secret "Well done!" Let the same things be suggested to us, not in the comparative view of our own impulses, but in noticing the men around us, and the same sentiments will arise. A being manifestly under the influence of principles higher than our own awakens our *reverence*, and obtains a recognized title to guide us: a being with evident force of resolve to execute, more unfailingly than ourselves, what is simply on our level, excites our *admiration*, and wins authority over us. The one is the representative of *Conscience*, the other of *Will*: the one has the spiritual attribute of nobler quality; the other, in greater quantity: the one attracts our aspiration, and is contemplated as something godlike; the other inclines us to obedience, and is owned as something kingly: the one becomes the occasion of religion; the other, of government.

Digitized by Google

If, then, there were no inequalities of character among our race, the sentiments of worship and of allegiance would remain undeveloped. But the co-existence in the same *family* of persons of different *ages* secures this felt inequality, and provides that every human being shall in turn live in the presence of those who are above him in both the attributes of manhood. The parent stands to the child in the place of God and King. It is this, indeed, which *makes* the proper *family*, in distinction from the *litter* and the *brood*. Were this all, however, the sentiments in question would never pass the mere inchoate state, or effect any wider and more enduring combinations; all populations would be composed, not of communities, but, like the Greenlanders and others, of families living in sight of one another. But as the child becomes the adult, the moral inequalities which had been furnished by difference of age are replaced by those which the varieties of natural genius and character supply. It is impossible for a number of human beings to be collected within reach of mutual influence without the appearance among them of some *highest* soul to be their Prophet, and some *bravest* soul to be their King: and around such a one — in the former case, as a source of law for internal guidance, in the latter, of strength for external defence — will gather the first truly social group. Without such centre of attraction, it does not seem that any equal and collateral sentiments, either of fear or friendship, which men might entertain *inter se*, could become sufficiently reflective or sufficiently extended to give rise to the primitive

Digitized by Google

forms of association. It is then the common *looking up*, not the mutual *looking round*, that effects this end: and society and reverence begin together. It is conceivable that, for a while, a human object alone might engage this feeling; but soon it must rise and determine itself towards invisible powers. For the strongest human wills have yet a stronger, and after every triumph, vanish as transient effects: and the highest consciences have yet a higher, that they only serve; and while the noblest beings pass away, the binding law they lived to manifest continues still the same. Thus that which they made men venerate becomes disengaged from their personality, and felt to be independent of the limitations of mortal existence: and the transcendent form of reverence arises which constitutes proper Religion. Now, for the first time, there is an invisible object of faith and homage distinct from the visible; — the latter becomes simply *representative* of the former, — the embodiment of a sacred rule over human life; — not the divinity, but the shrine. The lawgiver and prophet, being now only the *medium* of faith, becomes the source of Church and State, as separate from Religion.

If such are the elementary forces from which a community would arise, one and the same germ contains the future growth of Church and State. There is nothing to prevent the *Lawgiver*, who defines and enforces recognized obligations, — and the *Prophet*, who awakens the sense of new ones, — from meeting in the same man: and until experience has exercised its analytical industry on the

Digitized by Google

functions of human life, this will actually be the case. The two characters were united in Moses, in Pythagoras, in Mahomet: and all societies which either are actually traceable to the spontaneous principles of combination in their simplest state, or have ascended to these in theory, and been deliberately constructed upon them, have possessed a theocratic character, and expressed the whole *conscience* of their members. Nay, in the conception which we naturally form of a *perfect* community, we unavoidably resume the same idea, and wholly sink the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical rule. In the imagination of a Messianic kingdom which occupied the Hebrew mind, — in the expectation of a Millennial reign, which engages the thoughts of many Christians, — in the faith which all disciples have of a society of the immortal good beyond the reach of death, — a perfect coalescence takes place between the ideas of Religion and Government, and the rule of a Divine Law over reverencing natures absorbs the functions of them both. If only *one* association existed in the world, so as to be wholly intent on its *internal* regulation, and if the two qualities of higher conscience and of stronger will were always combined in its leaders, this union of the elements of Church and State would never be dissolved. But these are not the actual conditions under which we live. A community falls into *foreign* collisions and disputes; *military* qualities — rarely found in the prophetic type of man, and implying a predominance of force of will over loftiness of conscience — become indispensable; the hero most able to head the busi-

Digitized by Google

ness of self-defence and aggression acquires a temporary preëminence: and different functionaries now represent the moral law and the resolute strength of the society. The effects of this loss of isolation and assumption of *external* relations all tend to widen the separation of Church and State. Conquest is made; new territory is taken, partitioned, and occupied: the direction of this work devolves on the victorious leader, apart from the earlier governors left at home. Hence he obtains *kingly rights* over the fresh acquisitions; and to guard these rights, to modify, to interpret them, a special body of rules and officers becomes necessary, constituting a different system from that which before had managed all common affairs. Of this system, the title to personal possession and the preservation of contracts of service and tenancy would manifestly form the chief objects, as between the members of the victorious people. Growing up by a recognized authority among themselves, it would still not lose the *moral* character hitherto felt to belong to all rule, and would be acknowledged as binding on them in a higher sense than that it was their interest to submit. In other words, the new code, though proceeding from their State-power, not from their Church-power, would still form part of their *religion*. With the subjugated tribe it is different. In relation to them, conquest gives rise to a system of *coercive* law, to which there is nothing answering in their conscience. It is invested with no sacred character, and is long obeyed under protest and with reluctance. Hence arises a great part of the penal legislation of a coun-

Digitized by Google

try: and, connecting this consideration with the preceding, we see why the State officers — representatives of *kingly* rights — take cognizance of offences against public authority and private property; while the Church courts long retain the cases of primitive difficulty and injury between human beings, and settle the domestic questions of divorce, paternal right, and inheritance.

Besides these general causes, involved in the assumption of external relations by a community, certain special agencies connected with the historical development of Christian institutions have forced asunder the associate ideas of Church and State. During the first century of our era, the disciples not only held a new religion, but constituted a new polity. Their monotheistic earnestness was alone sufficient to prevent their having recourse to the legal system of franchises and protection afforded by a Pagan government, especially under a sway which no longer left to any of its subjects a history to boast or a country to serve. Add to this the expectation of a speedy return of Christ to reign over them, the feeling of allegiance to him, the sense of fellow-citizenship with each other, and total alienation from the world about to perish; and it can no longer excite surprise that they organized a distinct republic, and secretly withdrew their civil as well as their religious life within the precincts of their own association. Meanwhile, the Empire continued, and its law nominally regulated the political affairs and the temple worship of all civilized lands. When Constantine, therefore, embraced the new faith, he was himself at

Digitized by Google

the head of a Pagan system of Church and State; he found coexisting a Christian system performing also the functions of Church and State; with this he formed an alliance, dropping the Church element of the Pagan scheme, appropriating the State element of the Christian, but leaving without much interference its ecclesiastical offices. Thus two social mechanisms, long independent, and even antagonistic, recognized each other; instead of either absorbing the other, they entered into compromise and partnership; and the false distinction between secular and spiritual things became established. The subsequent dissolution of the Empire confirmed and widened this distinction. One temporal sword no longer held sway over the whole geographical extension of the faith: but while Christendom retained its unity, new centres of political government were everywhere forming themselves, and creating distinct social systems; the incipient promise of modern European nations. Provinces had long established their independent sovereignty, before the ecclesiastical power ceased to be Catholic; and even the mere partnership of Constantine's creation was destroyed by the vicissitudes which caused the dismemberment of the Empire to precede the disruption of the Church.

It is evident also that the growth of sacerdotal doctrine could not but contribute to the same end. Not that this would deny to the Church any of the proper powers of the State. But not even the genius of a Gregory could reduce the world to an avowed theocracy. And, failing this, Priesthood takes

Digitized by Google

the other course, and denies to the State the powers of the Church; claims supernatural offices which no human governor may touch, yet without which all other ordering of life is vain; and thus goes apart from the system which it cannot appropriate and absorb. The Catholic doctrine, it is true, maintains an accord, to some extent, between the civil and ecclesiastical powers as to their *ends;* both are to secure obedience to the moral law of God. But the one is an earthly, the other a divine instrument, for this end: and till the sceptre is content to do the bidding of the crosier, it is but the emblem of an agency unaccepted and unblessed.

But of all the causes tending to detach from each other the ideas of Church and State, none has had so powerful an operation as the Lutheran tenet of Justification by faith. It represents Christianity as entirely anulling all Law, and substituting a principle at variance with any lingering consciousness of its dictates. It treats the whole system of feelings connected with the moral sense, — the scrupulous care, the self-denying resolve, the binding pressure of duty, the recoil from retributory justice, — as the characteristic marks of an unregenerate mind: and regards the extinction of all these in a sentiment of reliance on the sacrifice of Calvary, as a necessary act of Christian self-renunciation, fulfilling the one great end of Revelation. Now the State subsists wholly on the natural sense of obligation; according to the Lutheran view, the Church subsists wholly to supplant it. The State proclaims the supremacy of Law; the Church, its abrogation. The State relies

Digitized by Google

on the hopes and fears of responsible beings; the Church triumphs in their annihilation. Thus the two institutions aim at ends directly contradictory: the conditions of mind which they severally seek to produce in a people cannot coexist; and every individual successfully ruled by the one is detained or reclaimed from the other. The State, in short, belongs wholly to the system of unconverted human nature and a perishing world: and is the positive opposite of the Church, which, by agencies beyond the compass of our will, gathers out of that world an emancipated community of saints. This doctrine is the true source of the modern notion of a "separation of Church and State": and in proportion to their earnestness in its adoption do English sects distinguish themselves in the agitation of which this phrase is the symbol. The strength of Voluntaryism lies in the belief that the ends of Christianity are not moral ends.

From this brief account of the disturbances which have interrupted the original partnership between the two elementary powers of society, some augury may be collected as to their possible re-approximation. We have found them drawn into contrast with each other by *historical* differences of *origin* in their present form; by *doctrinal* differences as to their *ends;* and *practical* differences as to their *means.* The effects arising from the first of these may fairly be expected to wear out. The accidental conditions under which Christian institutions on the one hand, and the political arrangements of modern Europe on the other, developed themselves into their present form,

Digitized by Google

offer now but the mere inert resistance of custom to the permanent force of natural human sentiment: and must insensibly yield up their influence to the new social tendencies in which that sentiment will ever reassert itself. Then, the doctrinal schemes by which the *ends* of Church and State have been brought into contrariety, either as to their nature or as to their extent, are, in our estimation, false. Neither have the sacerdotal claims which would add a supernatural function to the moral duties of the Church, any foundation in Christianity: nor is the Lutheran disregard of Law, which would withdraw from the Church the moral aims of the State, any thing but the exaggeration of a truth which leads to no such consequence. There remains, as the only real and essential distinction between the two institutions, a practical difference in their *means*. *Coercion* must be habitually employed by the civil society against the violator of its laws, irrespectively of the offender's own sense of justice; by the religious society *never*. The only punishments it can invoke in this latter relation are such as may be in accordance with the pledged conscience of the transgressor, constituting an outward expression of his remorse, and partaking of the nature of *penance:* or else, they must amount to simple *expulsion*, — an act which may have no doubt a penal *effect*, but is intended as merely declaratory of a cessation of the bond of connection. The ground of this distinction is found in the very idea of the two associations. Both aim at the governance of life by moral law; but with this difference: the Church proceeds on the assurance that

Digitized by Google

all men are conscious of that law; the State, on the observation that some men violate it. The Church assumes their anxiety to serve it; the State, their reluctance. The Church, looking round on the sphere of human temptation, speaks out in the vow, "We will not"; the State, in the command, "Thou shalt not." The Church, therefore, from its very nature, relies upon the feeling of moral Reverence; the State, on the dread of Retribution. If all its proper purposes could be accomplished by the former, nothing would remain for the latter to achieve: but conscience failing to prevent evil in its spiritual beginnings, fear must interpose to arrest its external development. The State is thus the *dernier ressort* to the Church, — society's forlorn hope for the check of moral ills. And hence it is, that it *must never fail;* or else, being an expression of the community's strength of Will, it loses its *right*, no less than its might: while the Church, representing the common aspiration towards a perfection that cannot cease to be owned as divine, remains unimpaired through all failures.

It is obvious that the characteristic use of coercion by the State, though a peculiarity in the nature of its *means*, must introduce a limitation into the system of *ends* at which it aims. There is no human good, no element of social perfection, which it might not fitly attempt to realize, if there were reasonable hope of success. But wielding no instruments except the hope of public reward and the fear of public punishment, it is unable to reach the whole of life; and large provinces of duty must remain beyond

Digitized by Google

its vigilance and control. Without attempting to draw any exact boundary around its proper realm, — which indeed must vary with the historical conditions by which it is environed, — it is clear that it can take cognizance only of external actions, susceptible of attestation; that it cannot regulate acts of simple prudence and imprudence; that, even of injuries, only those can be brought within its power which admit of definition, and of something like admeasurement, both as to their intent and as to their effects. Though, however, these limitations might be carried further, we altogether deny that they reduce the business of the State to the "protection of body and goods." We believe that a government which refuses to attempt more will soon be unable to accomplish this: and that when it *seems* to move with success within these narrow bounds, the order of which it boasts is bequeathed from an age when it aspired to a nobler power, and is sustained by sentiments lingering from that better time. The superannuated village schoolmaster may retire into the dignity of village constable; and when he sees the decent habits, the quiet security, the neighborly respect, prevailing in the place, not a cabbage stolen from the gardens, not a bit of washed linen threatened in the fields, the old man may indulge in complacent reflections on the potency of his office, and see in all this the terrors of his staff. He forgets that he taught the alphabet before he vindicated the law; that the men and women in the cottages were, a few years ago, the boys and girls on his old school-bench; that the kindly thoughts around him were born in the

Digitized by Google

play-ground or the cricket-green; and that the reverent sense of Christian hope and duty, first awakened by his own serious voice, is the real guardian of the peace and order he admires. A State that, on the appointment of some philosophy more easy than wise, is in a condition to retire into official "protector of body and goods," must have had some more respectable occupation in its youth.

On the whole, we should say, as the general result of the previous reflections, that the CHURCH is that system of organized agencies by which men in society may be led towards compliance with *the whole moral law*, through *reverence*: and that the STATE is that system of organized agencies by which men in society may be led to comply with *such parts of the moral law* as are *within the reach of public reward and punishment*. Besides the *Church proper*, including the arrangements (1.) for worship, (2.) for education, there are a number of *unorganized* agencies of the same class: they comprise the whole set of influences proceeding from higher minds upon lower, whether in domestic government, in the exercises of charity, in literature, or in social intercourse. And besides the *State proper*, including (1.) the legislative, (2.) the judicial, (3.) the executive systems, there are also a number of *unorganized* agencies of the same class: they comprise the whole set of *prudential* motives, whether from physical pleasure and pain, from public opinion, or from expectation of future reward and punishment. It is evident, that if the Church, in this largest sense, were *perfect* in its action, the State functions would never come into existence,

Digitized by Google

but always stand at zero: that if, on the other hand, the Church had *no* action, the State functions would become infinite, and cease to be possible: and that every success of the Church is a burden taken from the State. What then is the conclusion to be drawn as to the mutual relation of the two institutions? Manifestly this: since a *Society-in-State* has no ends of self-government, which the same *Society-in-Church* does not aim to anticipate and realize in a better way, *the former has the deepest interest in aiding the experiment of the latter.* In principle, then, we see no ground for denouncing the interposition of civil support on behalf of educational and religious institutions. If it be competent to the sovereign authority to spend the resources of the country in *punishing* wrong-doers, it seems perverse to say that the same authority may not engage itself in *preventing* their existence. Unfortunately, however, the abstract conclusion which we have stated lies at a vast distance from the practical questions which create the ecclesiastical controversies of the present day, and affords but an incipient clew to guide us through their intricacies. The State authorities may have the *right* to aid the Church; but suppose they cannot find it; that the national sources of Reverence lie among the unorganized agencies, and have deserted the visible ecclesiastical system; suppose that the citizens, unconscious of the devout sentiments which unite them at heart, are so sensitive about the formal beliefs which separate them in understanding, that a common recognition by the sovereign power threatens an implacable strife; suppose it impossible to gain

Digitized by Google

assurance that the thing aided *is* a Church and a *national* Church, — that is, does really inspire *reverence for the obligations of citizenship;* — what then is to be done? Can the right take effect? or, for want of the proper historical conditions, must it be inactive till better times? We shall not attempt to resolve these questions now; anxious, in tracing our path through the theory of Polity, to admit no disturbance from the sceptic laugh, and fanatic fears, and party rage, that confuse every entrance on its practice.

Digitized by Google

THEODORE PARKER'S DISCOURSE OF RELIGION.*

[From the Prospective Review for February, 1846.]

It is a dishonorable characteristic of the present age, that on its most marked intellectual tendencies is impressed a character of Fear. While its great practical agitations exhibit a progress towards some positive and attainable good, all its conspicuous movements of thought seem to be mere retreats from some apprehended evil. Its new sects are the results of certain prevalent antipathies, and are like herds flying from a common repulsion. The open plain of meditation, over which, in simpler times, earnest men might range with devout and unmolested hope, bristles all over with directions, showing which way we are *not* to go. Turn where we may, we see warnings to beware of some sophist's pitfall, or Devil's ditch, or Fool's Paradise, or Atheist's desert, or inclosure of the elect, with its "*procul este profani.*" A despair of truth seizes our timid and degenerate men. Checked and frightened at the

* A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion. By Theodore Parker, Minister of the Second Church in Roxbury, Mass. Boston. 1842.

Digitized by Google

entrance of every path on which they venture, they spend their strength in standing still; or devise ingenious proofs, that, in a world where periodicity is the only progress, retrogradation is the discreetest method of advance. The first Tractarians were evidently men not unused to explore the grounds and seek the limits of religious faith; and having pushed forward over this vast field till it was trackless except by heretic feet, they were startled at their position; hid their faces, and refused to look into the distance; grew terrified at their own lengthening shadow, and felt as though at its further extremity it were already dipping into some dread abyss. The recoil of Coleridge, and more recently of the Cambridge men, from the philosophy of Locke, is no less clearly an act of repugnance; a shrinking from consequences which it was not expedient to meet. And now a certain spectral monster, called "Transcendentalism," disturbs the serenity of conventional believers, and produces an excitement greatly disproportioned to its alleged feeble and unsubstantial nature. Those who report upon it declare that they plainly discern it in many places, and can trace all its approaches; they pronounce it, at the same time, the most bewildered of chimeras, — in fact, entirely destitute of eyesight: yet, wherever it gropes its way, it produces, like the hunter in blind-man's-buff, first an audible rustling in the childish crowd, and then a shooting off in all practicable radii. But it has always been the way with ghosts to do little, and to scare much. This intellectual cowardice — connected, like all cowardice, with an unloving and

Digitized by Google

cruel temper — is a fatal indication of religious decline; and a source of the imbecility of the pulpit, compared with the power of the secular press. Religion no longer thinks, soliloquizes, and is overheard in worship; but stands consciously in the presence of a host of enemies, and elaborates its defence and plans its attack. Theologies, philosophies, arise, not now as the simple tent which the soul would pitch, and where it would abide, and whence look forth, under the shelter of sufficient faith from the natural inclemencies of this universe; but as shot-proof fortifications, built with engineering skill, to protect some threatened treasure, and defy some formidable artillery. Anxiety for a *safe* creed, and, from reaction, indifference to all creed, are the two bad sentiments with which priestly influence has impregnated the mind of Europe, in place of the natural desire for a *true* creed. The rarity with which doctrines connected with morals and divinity are looked at with a single eye to their truth or falsehood, is disheartening to those who know what this symptom implies. The fear of doubt is already a renunciation of faith. With all the talk of infidelity in this age, no one has more certainly a heart of unbelief than he who cannot simply trust himself to the realities of God; who cannot say, "If here there be light, let us use it gladly; if otherwise, let us go into the dark, where Heaven ordains: owning our helplessness, we shall feel the Invisible Presence near us keeping his holy watch; but pretending that we see, we shall be left to a bleak and lonely night."

To those who are haunted with fears lest "neo-

Digitized by Google

logical" speculation should undermine the foundations of religion, it must be consolatory to remember, that though mankind, according to the testimony of divines, have always been on the point of renouncing their belief in God, they have never actually done so. On the appearance of every great class of discoveries in physical science, every large extension of ancient chronology, every new school of metaphysics, the danger has been announced as imminent: yet the Atheism of the world, like the Millennium of the Church, is a catastrophe which continues to be postponed. The researches which assigned a high antiquity to the dynasties of Egypt and the mythologies of India, were charged with audacity for trespassing beyond the Flood, and even passing without notice by the gates of Eden; as if, in fixing the place of Menes, and finding the origin of the Sagas, the Creator was superseded, and the world abandoned to fatalism. The great geological periods, descending by colossal steps down into the darkness of the past eternity, were thought to conduct into the chambers of a godless necessity. The theory which admits, and the theory which denies, the "Necessary Connection" between Cause and Effect, have both been accused of hostility to the first principles of natural theology, and have both been employed to invalidate them. And the attempt to evade the danger by resolving all assignable powers into the activity of God, is condemned as mischievously Pantheistic, melting away every divine element from life in the solvent of indiscriminate mysticism. Yet, after all these shocks, the

Digitized by Google

theoretic faith of men stands fast, and the shelter of a divine rule is felt to overarch us still. Amid the vicissitudes of the intellect, worship retains its stability: and the truth which, it would seem, cannot be proved, is unaffected by an infinite series of refutations. How evident that it has its ultimate seat, not in the mutable judgments of the understanding, but in the native sentiments of Conscience, and the inexhaustible aspirations of Affection! The supreme certainty must needs be too true to be proved: and the highest perfection can appear doubtful only to Sensualism and Sin.

Gladly then do we gird up our hearts to follow the bold and noble steps of Theodore Parker over the ample province of thought which he traverses in his Discourse on Religion. However startling the positions to which he conducts us, and however breathless the impetuosity with which he hurries on, the region over which he flies is no dream-land, but a *real* one, which *will* be laid down truly or falsely in the minds of reflecting men; his survey of it is grand and comprehensive, complete in its boundaries, if not always accurate in its contents; and the glass of clear and reverential faith through which he looks at all things, presents the most familiar objects in aspects beautiful and new. The book treats in orderly succession of every topic interesting to the religious philosopher, and needful to be handled in the construction of a positive faith. It opens with a discussion of the Metaphysics of Religion, distributed over two Books; in the first of which the psychological sources of worship are investigated and

Digitized by Google

traced through their manifestations in Fetichism, Polytheism, Monotheism; while in the second, the passage is made to the Ontological conclusions which the religious sentiment demands, and, in determining the relations of God to Nature and to the Soul the questions of Miracle and Inspiration are reviewed. This leads to the Historical and Critical theology of the two succeeding Books; the first treating of Jesus of Nazareth personally, the source of his authority, the essence of his religion, the attributes of his character; the second, of the Hebrew records by which his nation is known to us, and the Greek, in which the impression of himself and his disciples is handed down; the claims of their origin, the credibility of their contents, and the just limits to our veneration for their statements. A concluding Book examines the origin, organization, and distribution of the Church; and estimates the merits and defects of its Romish, its Protestant, and its Philosophical parties. So vast a mass of matter, requiring for its management a very various skill, cannot, it may be supposed, be dealt with by one man, and in one volume, otherwise than superficially. Yet there is a mastery shown over every element of the great subject, and the slight treatment of it in parts no reader can help attributing to the plan of the work, rather than to the incapacity of the author. From the resources of a mind singularly exuberant by nature and laboriously enriched by culture, a system of results is here thrown up, and spread out in luminous exposition: and though the processes are often imperfectly indicated by which they have been

Digitized by Google

reached, they so evidently come from the deep and vital action of an understanding qualified to mature them, that an opponent who might stigmatize the *book* as superficial, would never venture to call the *author* so. There are few men living, we suspect, who would like to have a controversy with him on any one of his many heresies. The references in his notes, though often only general, are, when needful, sufficiently specific and various to show an extent of reading truly astonishing in so young a writer: yet the glow and brilliancy of his page prove that the accumulated mass of other men's thought and learning has been but the fuel of his own genius. The copiousness of German erudition, systematized with a French precision, seems here to have been absorbed by a mind having the moral massiveness, the hidden tenderness, the strong enthusiasm, of an English nature. The least perfect of his achievements appears to us to be the metaphysical: he is too ardent to preserve self-consistency throughout the parts of a large abstract scheme; too impetuous for the fine analysis of intricate and evanescent phenomena. His philosophical training, however, gives him great advantages in his treatment of concrete things and his views of human affairs: and in nothing would he, in our opinion, more certainly excel than in history, — whether the history of thought and knowledge, or of society and institutions. As to the *form* in which our author presents his ideas, our readers must judge of that from the passages we may have occasion to quote. We have small patience at any time with the criticisms

Digitized by Google

on style in which "Belles Lettres men" and rhetoricians delight: and where we speak to one another of the solemn mysteries of life and duty and God, such things affect us like a posture-master's discussion of Christ's sitting attitude in the Sermon on the Mount, or some prudish milliner's critique on the penitent wiping his feet with her hair. Men who neither think nor feel, but only learn, pretend, and imitate, may make an *art* out of the deepest utterances of the human soul: but from these histrionic beings, who would applaud the "elocution" of Isaiah, and study the "delivery" of a "Father, forgive them!" such a man as Theodore Parker recalls us with a joyful shame. "Thought," said Plato, "is the soul's hidden speech"; with our author, and all such, we have the obverse of this, viz. Speech, which is the soul's open Thought. He reasons, he meditates, he loves, he scorns, he weeps, he worships, *aloud*. It may be thought very improper that a man should thus publish *himself*, instead of some choice, decorous excerpts, "fit for the public eye." As, in prayer to God, it is deemed, in these days, no sin to utter, instead of our real desires, something else which we should hold it decent to desire; so, in addressing men, it is esteemed wise, not to say, or even to inquire, what we *do* think, but to put forth what it might be as well to think. Weary of all this, and finding nothing but a holy dulness and sickly unreality in the conventional theology of the pulpit and the press, we delight in our author's irrepressible unreserve. No doubt there are rash judgments; there is extravagant expression; the coloring

Digitized by Google

of his emotions is sometimes too vivid; the edge of his indignation too sharp. But he believes, and *therefore* does he speak. You have his mind. These things are true to him: and if not true in themselves, that is an objection to their substance, not to their style; the excessive force of which, while it drives the truth the deeper, lays the error more open to reply. It has become the practice, in matters of theology, always to suppose that a writer acts upon the "doctrine of reserve," — which, by the way, Tractarian Jesuitry might have saved itself the trouble of recommending; — it is thought impossible that a divine should say simply what he means, nothing more, nothing less. Especially if he recedes from the traditional standard of his class, he is supposed to have "gone away backward" immeasurably beyond his apparent position. The heresies he produces are concluded to be a mere sample of the store he carries in his satchel: and every doubt he avows becomes a multiplying factor, capable of indefinite involution, and sure to reappear in terrible dimensions from the imagination of some accuser. We propose it as a problem to the curious, "Why men, particularly preachers, are rarely supposed to believe *more* than they profess; continually, *less;* scarcely ever, precisely that, and nothing else?" Is the instinctive shrewdness of the world mistaken in this impression? Not in the least. Secular common sense sees the matter as it is. And if the very existence of such a rule of interpretation does not show how habitual to the clerical character pretence or self-sophistication has become, we know not how

Digitized by Google

to explain it. Nay, so well understood is the shameful fact, that it is openly alleged as a reason for further unveracity. Experienced counsellors speak as if it were a regular law of the human mind to believe, not just what is told it, but something different. They advise us to compute this deflection, and allow for it. To the young soul, burning with guileless truth and love, they say, "Be cautious; do not disturb men's minds by novelties; let their harmless mistakes alone; they cannot safely do without them. Besides, you will be sure to be misunderstood, and supposed to go further than you do. You will really leave 'the truest impression' by a judicious silence, or a mere hint that these things are not to be put upon a level with 'essentials.'" That is to say, if we would obtain credence, we must give forth, not truth, but a lie. Past falsehoods are made the plea for present ones; and such as to-day is, will the morrow also be; and so on to the end of the chapter of hypocrisy; unless men arise who cannot hold the word that is in them, and will cast this diplomacy to the winds. And after all, it is only the false men that can long "misunderstand" the true; natural speech is not hard to the upright; it can put no one out of his reckoning, but those who miss in it the "hints" they have been accustomed to calculate, and their favorite "silence which speaks for itself." Honor then to the manly simplicity of Theodore Parker. Perish who may among Scribes and Pharisees, — "orthodox liars for God," — *he* at least "has delivered his soul."

Of the noble spirit of truth that is in him, some

Digitized by Google

idea may be formed from the following sketch of the preaching of Jesus: —

"Yet there were men who heard the new word. Truth never yet fell dead in the streets: it has such affinity with the soul of man, the seed, however broadcast, will catch somewhere, and produce its hundredfold. Some kept his sayings and pondered them in their heart. Others heard them gladly. Did priests and Levites stop their ears? Publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before them. Those blessed women, whose hearts God has sown deepest with the orient pearl of faith; they who ministered to him in his wants, washed his feet with tears of penitence, and wiped them with the hairs of their head, — was it in vain he spoke to them? Alas for the anointed priest, the child of Levi, the son of Aaron, men who shut up inspiration in old books, and believed God was asleep. They stumbled in darkness, and fell into the ditch. But doubtless there was many a tear-stained face that brightened like fires new stirred as Truth spoke out of Jesus's lips. His word swayed the multitude as pendant vines swing in the summer wind; as the spirit of God moved on the waters of chaos, and said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. No doubt many a rude fisherman of Gennesareth heard his words with a heart bounding and scarce able to keep in his bosom, went home a new man, with a legion of angels in his breast, and from that day lived a life divine and beautiful. No doubt, on the other hand, Rabbi Kozeb Ben Shatan, when he heard of this eloquent Nazarene, and his Sermon on the Mount, said to his disciples in private at Jerusalem, This new doctrine will not injure us, prudent and educated men; we know that men may worship as well out of the temple as in it; a burnt-offering is nothing; the ritual of no value; the Sabbath like any other day; the Law faulty in many things,

Digitized by Google

offensive in some, and no more from God than other laws equally good. We know that the priesthood is a human affair, originated and managed like other human affairs. We may confess this to ourselves, but what is the use of telling it? The people wish to be deceived; let them. The Pharisee will conduct wisely like a Pharisee, — for he sees the eternal fitness of things, — even if these doctrines should be proclaimed. But this people, who know not the Law, what will become of them? Simon Peter, James, and John, those poor, unlettered fishermen on the Lake of Galilee, to whom we gave a farthing and the priestly blessing in our summer excursion, what will become of them when told that every word of the Law did not come straight out of the mouth of Jehovah, and the ritual is nothing? They will go over to the Flesh and Devil, and be lost. It is true, that the Law and the Prophets are well summed up in one word, Love God and man. But never let *us* sanction the saying; it would ruin the seed of Abraham, keep back the kingdom of God, and 'destroy our usefulness.' Thus went it at Jerusalem. The new word was 'Blasphemy,' the new prophet an 'Infidel,' 'beside himself,' 'had a devil.' But at Galilee, things took a shape somewhat different; one which blind guides could not foresee. The common people, not knowing the Law, counted him a prophet come up from the dead, and heard him gladly. Yes, thousands of men, and women also, with hearts in their bosoms, gathered in the field and pressed about him in the city and the desert place, forgetful of hunger and thirst, and were fed to the full with his words, so deep a child could understand them; James and John leave all to follow him who had the word of eternal life; and when that young carpenter asks Peter, Whom sayest thou that I am? it has been revealed to that poor, unlettered fisherman, not by flesh and blood, but by the word of the Lord, and he can say, Thou art the Christ, the

Digitized by Google

Son of the living God. The Pharisee went his way, and preached a doctrine that he knew was false; the fisherman also went his way; but which to the Flesh and the Devil?

"We cannot tell, no man can tell, the feelings which the large, free doctrines of absolute Religion awakened when heard for the first time. There must have been many a Simeon waiting for the consolation; many a Mary longing for the better part; many a soul in cabins and cottages and stately dwellings, that caught glimpses of the same truth, as God's light shone through some crevice which Piety made in that wall Prejudice and Superstition had built up betwixt man and God; men who scarce dared to trust that revelation, —'too good to be true,' — such was their awe of Moses, their reverence for the priest. To them the word of Jesus must have sounded divine; like the music of their home sung out in the sky, and heard in a distant land, beguiling toil of its weariness, pain of its sting, affliction of despair. There must have been men, sick of forms which had lost their meaning, pained with the open secret of sacerdotal hypocrisy, hungering and thirsting after the truth, yet whom Error and Prejudice and Priestcraft had blinded so that they dared not think as men, nor look on the sun-light God shed upon the mind." — B. III. Ch. VII. p. 305.

To discuss worthily any one of the many great topics over which this volume carries us is impossible within the compass of a review. We shall endeavor to go at once to the bottom of the matter, and fix our attention on the real point of divergence between the author and his opponents. It is useless to dispute about the proof of the miracles, while we are at issue respecting their value, when proved; to inquire into the inspiration of prophets and apostles, without first determining what "inspiration" means;

Digitized by Google

to talk about the evidences of "Revealed" Religion, till we have agreed upon the distinction between "Nature" and "Revelation"; to balance the comparative claims of the Bible on one hand, and "Reason and Conscience" on the other, till we are sure that a book and a mental faculty *can* become proper competitors, and find a common field of rivalry. An inconsiderate reasoner is little aware how completely figurative are all theological formulas, implying a whole system of conceptions which they do not name, and which may not be held in common by himself and his opponent. It is in the *suppressed matter* of every religious controversy that the real disagreement will be found: and until the moral and psychological assumptions are drawn out, which dictate the phraseology of belief, discussion must continue to be an aimless battle of words.

The scheme of belief, which has given rise to Theodore Parker's reaction, may be summed up in these words: That Christianity is a divine *message*, imparted to *teach us our duty*, and to *present the sanctions of a future life:* and that this message is *proved to be from God*, by accompanying *miracles*, — the characteristic marks of his agency. We are so accustomed to this kind of language, that the real contents of it escape our notice. Let us carefully draw out the conceptions which it involves, with respect both to the divine nature and to the human mind.

As divine agency has an appropriate mark by which we may distinguish it, it is thus separated from other agencies, to which we should else refer

Digitized by Google

the phenomena submitted to our examination. By the help of this mark we are enabled to say, "This is from Heaven." Take away this mark, and we can no longer say, "This is from Heaven." God, therefore, is *one of a plurality of causes* now operative in the universe: and is discriminated, by a characteristic of his own, from other members of the general class of "powers."

The characteristic in question by which his phenomena are recognized is their *miraculous* nature. Without pausing to make any exact analysis of this phrase, we may consider it as denoting *departure from Law.* This will be admitted to be no incorrect statement of the feature we expect in any event claiming to be a miracle. In order, therefore, to rescue a phenomenon from other Causes and refer it to God, it must be exceptional and out of course in relation to the general order of the known world.

So long as this peculiarity *cannot* be shown to belong to it, the other Causes retain their claim upon it, and the attempt to refer it to the divine agency is unsuccessful. That is to say, *wherever Law is, God is not; and where God is, Law is not.* The boundary line thus drawn, — where does it pass? what lies within it, — what beyond? The realm of Law is coextensive with Nature, as an object of human study. *Science* is but our register of phenomenal laws; and nothing which can ask for entry there can be anomalous. Science, however, is excluded from no department of the material or mental creation. From the bed of the ocean to the clusters of the milky way, it passes with its detective instruments

Digitized by Google

of Number and of Measure, and never without the discovery, or at least the augury, of order. Whenever it alights on a fresh region, the first confusion begins instantly to show signs of an incipient symmetry, and the ranks of established law pass the confines which had arrested them, and spread their lines over the new realm. This, then, is a province actually conquered from God; as philosophy, with its "forces," advances, His power is dislodged in our belief, and retreats; and every fresh occupation effected by human knowledge is an expulsion executed upon the divine energy. That this is the sentiment really entertained by the upholders of the prevalent theology, is evident from the reluctance with which they admit any unexpected extension of the dominion of law. To find a rule of order, where they had fancied only insulated and anomalous volitions, seems to them like a loss of God. Who can doubt that this feeling is at the foundation of the hostility displayed against the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation"? The author has no doubt committed errors in detail, and availed himself of questionable hypotheses, in order to connect the parts of his system, and complete his generalization. But the detection of these imperfections has been sought with an eagerness not to be misunderstood; and has brought relief to the awe-struck imagination of many a reader, to whom the spreading tracks of law, as they pushed their prospective deeper and deeper into the wilderness of phenomena, seemed but a highway for the exile of his God. Science thus becomes burdened with a tremendous responsi-

Digitized by Google

bility: wherever it works, it is engaged in superseding Deity: it drops, as a deadly nightshade, on a cluster of phenomena, benumbing all that was divine; and as the narcotic circle widens, the awful sleep extends.

It would be unjust, however, to stop at this point in our development of the scheme in question. Nothing can be further from the minds of its advocates, than to snatch the whole domain of law from the Supreme Rule. They bring this also under the sway, not indeed of his present, but of his past volition; completing their system by the maxim, implied if not expressed, that where Law *is*, God *was*. Order, they affirm, requires *a Mind* to set it on foot, and carries with it the traces of antecedent Thought: no other causes are adequate for its explanation. The theory therefore sums itself up in this: that God, as an Agent, is excluded from the sphere of Order during its continuance, but is required for its commencement. "True," may the objector say, "*if* it ever commence at all. Putting myself back in imagination, as I doubt not you are doing, to a state of supposed chaos, and stripping the universe, as far as my conception can effect it, of all the forces which you admit to be operative *now*, I may grant that, out of this lawless confusion, law could not spontaneously arise; and that, *if* ever there were a time when Space was yet a seed-field of infinite, undetermined possibilities, nothing but a Mind could make election from such prior conditions, and elicit this definite creation and no other. But what reason have we for assuming the antecedence of any such

Digitized by Google

state of things? Why am I to suppose a time when there were no dynamic elements? What trace has electricity or gravity of a modern origin, — of origin at all? If such power acts now, — acted yesterday, — and has left its traces on structures immeasurably old, — where is the date past which it is irrational to run back its agency? Your proposition therefore is true as an hypothesis; but your hypothesis cannot be legitimated as a reality."

That *Order commencing* requires a *Mind* to produce it, may therefore be acknowledged by Atheist as well as Theist: that *Order existing* is beyond the reach of other and mere "natural" causes, must be denied by both. Indeed, the assertion is manifestly false, upon the principles of the scheme under review, and stands in direct contradiction to its assumption, that where Law is, God is not. What *are* those "other causes" which are incompetent to the case? Doubtless, such physical forces as we have before referred to, — electricity, gravity, &c. And to what *are* these powers adequate, if *not* to produce orderly phenomena? Name the sphere within which their explanation is valid, since it fails wherever uniformity is found. How do we know them as causes at all, except by the regularity of their effects, completing a determinate cycle of successions, and affording us fixed rules of expectation? What are all our books of Science but expositions of regular and beautiful phenomena, — nay, of *all* the regularity and beauty within the circle of our knowledge, — distinctly referred to these very causes? They account for order; or they account for nothing.

Digitized by Google

Every thing, then, in this form of Theism, depends on our ability to find some proof of the recency or commencement of the existing "forces of nature." Can any one produce such proof? Dr. Crombie confesses the failure of every attempt at metaphysical demonstration of this point: and resorts, as a last refuge, to certain physical and other indications impressed on the system of the world, at variance, as he thinks, with any great antiquity in the dynamics of the universe.* Of what kind are these indications? Why, the supposed resistance of an ether or of the sun's light to the planetary revolutions, — showing that the solar system will have an end and must have had a beginning: and the recent origin of the human species. The known energies of nature being inadequate to account for the origination of these structures, a divine source is indispensable. But what if, with our advancing knowledge, the "energies of nature" should be found *not* inadequate to the explanation, and the effects in question should enter the dominion of law? Are we in that case to turn Atheists? It would appear so, on this theory; — a theory, in which God is invoked only as a supplementary Cause, to eke out the imperfections of other powers, for ever spreading their acknowledged achievements to the prejudice and peril of his sovereignty; and all is staked on our *not finding a solution* for this or that scientific perplexity. Religion poises itself on a trembling apex, if this be really the footing on which it stands. †

* Natural Theology, Vol. I. Ch. I. §§ 10, 11.

† M. Comte, in his remarkable work, "Cours de Philosophie Posi-

Digitized by Google

The truth is, the Theist who takes this ground has made a concession false in itself, and fatal to his argument. Yielding to the tendency, invariably created by inductive science, to confound together the notions of *Law* and *Cause*, he has admitted physical agencies to be real powers: and has thus put instruments into the hands of Atheism, with which he will in vain struggle to contend: his utmost skill can give him only a drawn battle. Once allow that Causes are of two sorts, living Will and dead Forces, and the competition between them for the governance of the universe can never be determined. How alone can we proceed to make choice between two causes, both claiming the parentage of a given system of effects? Assuredly, by seeking throughout these effects for some feature exclusively belonging to one or the other of the causes in question. And where we have to account for a *limited series* of phenomena, we may hope to detect such signature of their origin; they will display some peculiarity in which they differ from other assortments of phenomena, and will so teach us something of the nature of their cause. But where the facts are absolutely infinite in number, and comprise all things, this method can lead to no result: because the phe-

---

tive," assumes this to be the real state of the relation between Science and Religion: and accordingly decides that there is "an inevitable antipathy between research into the real laws of phenomena and the inquiry respecting their essential causes": he treats as chimerical all attempts to remove the "radical incompatibility" between Theology and Positive Philosophy: and, relying on the irresistible scientific tendency of the modern European mind, entertains confident hopes of getting rid of the "Hypothesis of a God"! Tome IV. 51e Leçon.

Digitized by Google

nomena observed, not being *this* set, or *that* set, but *all* sets, — the sum total of what exists and what happens in the universe, — can have *no characteristic*, — no common property which other things have not; for those "other things" are in your list as well as these; and it is only by characteristics in the effect, that you can infer the nature of the Cause. A theology, therefore, which relinquishes the unity of causation, and permits Science to dismember the idea and create a whole class of powers, performs an act of suicide. By equating the distinction between divine and non-divine with the difference between natural and non-natural, it surrenders, in our opinion, the very citadel of faith: turns the universe from a monotheistic temple into a Pantheon of philosophy, and whips out the worshipper to make way for the experimentalist.

The same system makes assumptions respecting man, to which it is quite as difficult to give assent, as to its representation of God. Revelation, we are assured, is to be conceived of as a *message*, proved by attendant miracles to be from Heaven, and designed to *teach us our duty* and present the *sanctions of a future life.* Our duty, then, is authenticated by the message; and the message by the Divine mark. What is this but to say, that from *God as known* we learn *duty as not known?* Nay, it is worse; for there is no other knowledge of God here supposed than a recognition of his *power;* and what is really implied is this, — that our Senses may know his *physical* mark, when our Conscience cannot tell his *moral* mark. The moral faculty is the dunce, whose

Digitized by Google

dulness the senses, with their hornbook, undertake to instruct in the laws of right and wrong. When the lesson is learned by rote, it is enforced by the announcement of future retribution; and when carried into practice under this influence, the specific purpose of the Revelation, as above defined, is perfectly fulfilled. Yet it is plain that from a nature, assumed to be insensible to the intrinsic obligation of what is taught, nothing but external conduct, imitative of genuine and affectionate duty, can be obtained by this preceptive appeal to self-interest. And it would seem to follow, that Revelation accomplishes its characteristic end, when it has brought us to act, from prudential hope and fear, *as though we loved our neighbor and our God.* We are well aware that the supporters of this scheme do not practically attribute to human nature the moral stolidity which their theory suggests; they allow a considerable, but imperfect, perception of right and wrong. This, however, relieves no difficulty, and is an ineffectual compromise. The duties taught by the Revelation either accord with the moral perception addressed, or do not accord with it. If they do, then nothing beyond the natural law is given us. If they do not, then a collision arises between the requirements of miracle and the dictates of nature; and as the physical sign of God is assumed by the theory to be better known by us than his moral trace, and for this very reason adopted as the instrument of instruction, we ought at once to renounce the suggestions of Conscience, and do any wickedness which "the wonderful work" may recommend.

Digitized by Google

Whoever shrinks from this conclusion acknowledges that miracle cannot override Reason and Conscience; that these powers have a *veto* on all professing enactments of almighty law; and supply a paramount natural inspiration diviner than any that is supernatural.

We are convinced that, notwithstanding all that is said in praise of the "miraculous evidence," it is gradually loosening its hold on the minds even of its defenders. The indications of this are not to be mistaken. Attention is more and more drawn in and concentrated upon the great strong-hold, which we believe to be impregnable, — the resurrection of Christ, — an event whose *testimonial* character is, to say the least, very subordinate to its higher relations. The other miracles, so far from being deemed available as *media* of proof, are usually treated as the great *objects* of proof. They were once the affidavit; they are now the brief. And only those of them are heartily referred to, in which the *credential* element is lost and absorbed in their character of majesty or mercy, which enables the moral affections to quiet the cross-questionings of the understanding. Miracles in which the pure evidential ingredient is found unmixed, lie in the most unaccountable disuse, and appear even to excite an uncomfortable feeling. That Jesus paid a tax by having a fish caught with a shekel in his mouth, is not adduced to convince the doubting, of his divine authority: nor do we hear Paul's mission argued from the miracles wrought by his apron. Why not? These are genuine "*signs*," empty of all value *except* their signifi-

Digitized by Google

cance as evidence: *this* however remains quite perfect in them; for they are surely as good proofs of superhuman power as any other miracles. They rest on the same testimony as the events most firmly believed. Yet is there any one who does not feel, that the testimony will scarcely bear the strain of these events? And who then will deny, that it is the *moral* element of Christian history that must authenticate the miraculous, not the *miraculous* that authenticates the moral?

The whole language of this scheme involves conceptions unworthy of the present capabilities, often below the present state, of religion among thoughtful and devout men. For the first disciples, themselves on earth, and constantly looking for Christ's return hither, it was only natural to imagine two spheres of being, with the wilderness of clouds and space between; the one, the scene of God's local presence, where Jesus "sat at the right hand of God": the other, this world of waiting and of exile, which had nothing divine but as an express emanation from that upper sphere. Filled with the fancy of a physical distance between heavenly and human things, they fitly spoke of *Messengers* and *Ambassadors* of God, as we should of visitants from a foreign potentate. To treat the miracles as *Credentials* was a suitable thing, when such acts, though out of nature upon this lower earth and among ordinary men, were regarded as the established ways of the upper world to which Messiah belonged, and accepted as the overflow of his diviner nature upon his mortal career. And there was something in the way of

Digitized by Google

positive information, startling enough to be described as a *Message* from God, to those who thought themselves apprised of the speedy Advent and approaching end of the world. This was to them a notice of an historic event, which would affect their whole course of action in the mean while. But all this is incapable of harmonizing with our altered state. Our outward universe, our personal expectations, are totally different from theirs. Their one world, storehouse of heavenly things, has burst into ten thousand spheres, not one of which is nearer to the awful presence than our own. We are not remote from our Father, that he should have to *send* to us; there is no interval between. Nor are the universal principles of Faith and Duty, which constitute the essence of Christianity, so strange to our nature, that we should treat them as a communication from foreign parts. There is no going and coming, no telegraph, or embassage, no interposition and retreat, no divine sleeping and waking, in pure religion. The human race is for ever at home with God; and his Inspiration, intensest in the soul of the Galilean, is fresh and open for every age.

The recoil of Theodore Parker from the received system is vehement, and, we certainly think, excessive. But there is great difficulty in giving an account of his scheme as a whole: for he is not an exact writer, scarcely a consistent thinker; and his convictions are rather a series of noble fragments, waiting adjustment by maturer toil, than a compact and finished structure. His vast reading, and his quick sympathy with what is great and generous of

Digitized by Google

every kind, have given an eclectic character to his philosophy. His mind refuses to let go any thing that is true and excellent; yet in adopting it takes insufficient pains to weave it into the fabric of his previous thought; so that the texture of his faith presents a pattern not easy to reduce to symmetry. At one time he hates evil, like a Dualist; at another, pities it, like a Fatalist; now, melts away the human soul and becomes lost in the Universal Being, like a mystic; and then, brings out the individual free-will again with force and prominence worthy of a Stoic. Zeno and Spinoza seem to us to coexist in his mind; but they have not struck up a mutual acquaintance.

Our author argues from the religiosity of man to the reality of God; and concurs with Schleiermacher in regarding the *Sense of Dependence* as the source of human faith. The Sentiment of religion, like any other primitive want of our nature, doubtless directs itself to an object, not illusory, but actual; and that we "feel after" a perfect Being is enough to prove that he exists, and that we can "find Him." Thus is legitimated the "intuitive Idea of God," which is said to be the idea of "a Being infinite in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness." Of this "Idea" many things are affirmed, to which, we must confess, we can attribute no defensible meaning. It is said to be the "logical condition of all other ideas" (p. 21); and yet to be "afterwards fundamentally and logically established by the *à priori* argument" (p. 23). What media of proof can "establish" that which is the logical condition of those very media? It is

Digitized by Google

also said to be primitive and simple, like the idea of "existence" (p. 22): and it puzzles us to think how that which is perfectly unique and simple, and destitute of characteristics, can be "logically established." And the account which our author gives of this Idea does "*not*," he assures us, "*define* the nature of God, *but does distinguish our idea of him from* all other ideas and conceptions whatever." This appears to us simply self-contradictory: and we cannot deny that there are many other things of the same sort. We could easily dismiss blemishes of this kind, arising from insufficient precision, if the looseness did not accumulate and condense itself into a doctrinal conception very seductive, but, in our opinion, very erroneous. The oscillation back from the atheistical tendencies of a cold and mechanical philosophy has generally flung the reasoner into Pantheism: and our author has not, in our opinion, escaped the danger, — if, at least, we must judge by the words of his theory, rather than by the spirit of his mind. Offended at the usurpation effected by "natural powers," he has swept them *all* away, and drowned them in the ocean of the One Supreme. Shocked at the banishment of God as a living Agent from the actual scenes and recent ages of this world, he has revoked the Almighty Presence with such power as to make an absence of all else; and when we look round for the objects that should be His correlatives, the beings that should receive His regards, the theatre that was waiting for His energy, they are gone. Perhaps we shall be asked, "What then? Can there be in human faith an *excess*

Digitized by Google

of Deity? Is there any thing you would care to save from the general merging of all inferior causes?" Yes; we reply, there *is* one thing that must not be overwhelmed, even by an invasion of the Infinite Glory. Let all besides perish, if you will; but when you open the windows of heaven upon this godless earth, and bring back the sacred flood to swallow up each brute rebellious power, let there be an ark of safety built (it is Heaven's own warning word) to preserve the *Human Will* from annihilation: for if this sink too, the divine irruption designed to purify does but turn creation into a vast Dead Sea occupied by God. Theodore Parker has failed to perceive this. The more effectually to contradict the system which makes the Creative Power only One Cause among many, he has represented it as the Solitary Cause. Our author seems aware that he is open to this criticism: and as we should be sorry to be confounded with the alarmists who have raised the cry against him in his own land, we will state more precisely the ground of our objection to his theory. He observes: —

"The charge of Pantheism is very vague, and is usually urged by such as know least of its meaning. He who conceives of God, as the *immanent* cause of all things, as infinitely present, and infinitely active, with no limitations, is sure to be called a Pantheist in these days, as he would have passed for an Atheist two centuries ago. Some who have been called by this easy and obnoxious name, both in ancient and in modern times, have been philosophical defenders of the doctrine of one God, but have given him the historical form neither of Brahma nor Jehovah." — B. I. Ch. V. § 2, p. 94.

Digitized by Google

Now, if one who denied the Divine absenteeism from creation and life, as they now are, or, what is equivalent, the Divine inertness within them, were justly called a Pantheist, we should glory in the name. We do not believe in *epochs* of Creative activity, exceptional to the general constancy of a godless repose. With the prophet of old, we should be ashamed to think of the everlasting Hope of men, "as a Stranger in the land, and as a Wayfarer that turneth aside to tarry for a night."* His work is bounded by no chronological conditions, and is neither old nor new. His dial indicates always the same hour of eternity: its infinite shadow never moves; flung across the universe, it eclipses no living world, but darkens only death and the abyss. His agency is no intermittent tide, carrying a shifting wave of glory from sphere to sphere, from century to century, and leaving a dreary strand of desertion between, strewed only with the wrecks of the receding God. The legendary Creation-week, the consecrated date of our childish thought, has long since burst open, as the capsule of illimitable ages, through all of which the Productive Will has been as fresh and fertile as at the moment when "light was." We protest against the ascription of causality to the "laws of nature" which Science investigates. The methods of Science can teach us nothing but the order of phenomenal succession to which our expectations are to adjust themselves; and this, in spite of all the special pleading of "acute analysis,"

* Jer. xiv. 8.

Digitized by Google

does *not* fulfil our idea of Causation. The mind demands a Power beneath the surface over which sense and observation range, to evolve this serial order, to marshal the punctual ranks of beneficent and beautiful events, to measure the invariable cycles, and beat time to the listening seasons. We think that that Power cannot in reason be otherwise conceived than as the Living Will of God. So far, therefore, as outward nature is concerned, we are far from objecting to sink all its so-called "forces," and to regard them as so many manners of divine agency. "This view seems" to us, not only "at first," (as our author says,) but to the end,

". . . congenial to a poetic and religious mind. If the world be regarded as a collection of powers, — the awful force of the storm, of the thunder, of the earthquake; the huge magnificence of the ocean, in its slumber or its wrath; the sublimity of the ever-during hills; the rocks, which resist all but the unseen hand of time; these might lead to the thought that they were God. If men looked at the order, fitness, beauty, love, everywhere apparent in nature, the impression is confirmed. The All of things appears so beautiful to the comprehensive eye, that we almost think it is its own Cause and Creator. The animals find their support and their pleasure; the painted leopard and the snowy swan, each living by its own law; the bird of passage that pursues, from zone to zone, its unmarked path; the summer warbler which sings out its melodious existence in the woodbine; the flowers that come unasked, charming the youthful year; the golden fruit maturing in its wilderness of green; the dew and the rainbow; the frost-flake and the mountain snow; the glories that wait upon the morning, or sing the sun to his ambrosial rest;

Digitized by Google

the pomp of the sun at noon, amid the clouds of a June day; the awful pomp of night, when all the stars with a serene step come out, and tread their round, and seem to watch in blest tranquillity about the slumbering world; the moon waning and waxing, walking in beauty through the night; — daily the water is rough with the winds; they come or abide at no man's bidding, and roll the yellow corn, or wake religious music at nightfall in the pines: these things are all so fair, so wondrous, so wrapt in mystery, it is no marvel that men say, this is divine. Yes, the All is God. He is the light of the morning, the beauty of the noon, and the strength of the sun. The little grass grows by his presence. He preserveth the cedars. The stars are serene because he is in them. The lilies are redolent of God. He is the One; the All." — B. I. Ch. V. § 2, p. 89.

Our author professes to discard the view which he has thus unfolded with so much beauty. Yet he appears to us to adopt it entire, and to complete it by applying the very same mode of thought to the mental world, which is here restricted to the material. He is like many a deep thinker, who, when sent by Spinoza into his field of speculation, might say, "I go not"; but afterwards *went*. We wish he had definitely stated the reasons for either his supposed repudiation, or his apparent adoption, of the doctrine. In the absence of such guidance from him, we must explain, that the very ground of our own assent to the physical half of the theory, as just presented, is also the ground of our dissent from the other half. With our obstinate notions, the reasons for advancing thus far absolutely forbid us to move a step further: but, with more

Digitized by Google

open temper, our generous friend, if Philosophy compel him to go one mile, will go with her (or, may be, *without* her) twain. In the present instance, *what* is it which induces us to put denial on the whole system of scientific "forces"; to insist that God — Spirit though he is — is not hindered, by any veil of "nature," from *himself* putting the beauty and the wonder into the smallest of his works; and to proclaim all the laws of the unreflecting universe the action of his Mind? It is simply this, — the conviction that there is, and, for us, can be, no other Causation than the intelligent and voluntary; that no second sort of originating energy is at all conceivable; and that, in the last analysis, such phrases as "inanimate power" involve a contradiction. We are persuaded that no observation of consecutive phenomena could ever give us the notion of power; that the conscious rising of effort against resistance is the real source of the idea; and that *Cause* and *Will* mean at bottom the same thing. The experience of Causation in ourselves is the birthplace of all our knowledge and thought upon this matter; our whole language on the subject has no meaning whatever, except as it keeps close to this experience; for nothing new is afterwards added to it, though the benumbing influence of time may take something from it. When the wondering child asks what it is, or, as he will always say, *who* it is, that bends the rainbow, or hangs up the moon, he dreams of nothing else than of some living hand directed by intending thought. *That* is an originating cause well known to him: there is no other possible to his

Digitized by Google

conception *then;* no one can pretend that his subsequent experience gives him any closer insight into the nature of power: and we believe, therefore, that he will never be nearer the truth than when, under the intuitive feeling, common to him and Herschel and Archimedes, that 'every phenomenon must have a cause,' he attributes what he sees to an unseen and acting mind. No later discoveries, we do submit, can show the faintest right to correct this earliest impression. They only stupefy the first startled sentiment, and turn aside the questionings of reverent curiosity to make room for the researches of practical utility. For the satisfaction of faith we want to conceive of the *Cause*, for the service of life we want to find the *order*, of the events around us. The latter inquiry, in which we make continual progress, encroaches on the former, which remains to the manhood of our race the same mystery that brooded around its infancy. And while Custom gradually lays devout wonder into sleep, Science unhappily pilfers its language lying unguarded by its side; *antecedents* are labelled *Causes*, and laws become *powers;* the knowledge of nature gets surreptitiously baptized into the waters of faith, and goes through the world with a Christian name, but with a Pagan spirit. When thus arrogating the place of Religion, Science, with its stock of "forces" behind every cluster of phenomena, is but the *atheistic Fetichism* of our days; and there is at heart no meaner superstition than its dynamic worship. The Indian makes gestures in his wigwam before his "medicine-bag," praying to the *Spirits of power* that

Digitized by Google

rule his world: and the philosopher, — down he goes prostrate in the musings of his library, before his electricity and his nebular hypotheses, and his corpuscular attractions, — putting his trust in *powers of Matter* that govern the universe. Fetichism was *not* wrong in setting a background of living Will behind the objects and appearances of nature; but in the multitude and isolation of its unseen Agents. The Idolatry of Science has retained the multitude, and taken away the living Will. The simplicity of Monotheism cancels the pretended host, and takes the collective universe as the symbol of the Omni-present and the Omni-active Mind.

Now if it is the consciousness of Will in ourselves that sets us on search for a Will that rules the world, we must attribute to Him whom our faith may find the very kind of power which belongs to us; and we must retain in us the power we ascribe to Him. But this is what Pantheism declines to do. As soon as it has found its Source of the world, it abdicates the very faculties that impelled it on its holy pilgrimage. It recognizes in Him, not only the pervading Life of nature, but the Autocrat, or rather the very Essence, of the Soul. The believer insists on self-annihilation; says he has no power of his own; is as water under the finger of God; is cause of nothing; scarcely even an effect; only a phenomenon; a flake of snow falling on the mighty river. And so he dissolves himself away. Now, if this be true, and he could only have perceived it at first, then, having no causation within him, he would have sought and discovered none without him; and to him there

Digitized by Google

would have been no God. By knowing the truth, he would have been plunged into the most tremendous of falsehoods; and it is only by assuming a falsehood that he can reach the sublimest of truths! Religious faith can never be of this parricidal nature, devouring its own premises.

And it is curious to observe the action and reaction of this mode of thought, in its alternate influence on life and on religion. When the theorist has got rid of his Free-will and entire individuality in his sense of Deity, he has stopped, as far as practicable, and sealed up the proper sources of his feeling of causalty; he seeks to be disposed of with a serene fitness to the Divine Thought: his active energies decline; his only aim is to suffer without a murmur in evidence of utter self-renunciation: he dreams and mortifies his life away. Human nature, attenuated to this state, is no longer qualified to furnish, from its self-consciousness, the true and noble type of God: voluntary purpose, with the mental and moral attributes associated with it, is less and less attributed to him: the sickliness, which descended at first from the too overshadowing thought of Him, returns upwards and infects the conception of his Infinite nature; till He is dishonored into Nature's animal life or transmigrating principle; the spiritual mysticism completes its metaphysic revolution; and having lifted itself into too thin an air of contemplation, plunges down and dies in the mire of a gross idolatry.

For these reasons among others, we esteem it of the highest moment to protect from embarrassment

Digitized by Google

the consciousness in man that he is a Cause in himself; and to prevent the slightest loosening of the idea of WILL from the conception of God. And as the Will is that in which *Personality* resides, this is the same thing as to say, that we must hold fast to the faith of a Personal God. We strongly object to much of Theodore Parker's language on this subject. If, indeed, he uniformly adhered to the definition already given, "a Being infinite in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness," all would be well; for it is to save these very attributes from being frittered away, that we insist so strenuously on retaining the analogy between man and God in the quality of Will. Without this, as we have shown, there is no "Power"; without this, — the faculty which directs itself to preconceived ends, — how can there be "Wisdom"? without this, by which selection is made among undetermined possibilities, how can those exclusions take place which leave the ways of Heaven "good," and good alone? And if Will be indispensable, we know not how it is possible to satisfy our author's yearning after a God wholly "Absolute" and "without limitations." Is it possible to conceive of Will, and the moral attributes involving it, entirely insulated, and acting without any extrinsic conditions? Can there be *quæsita* without any *data?* We do confess that our notions of either *Mind* or *Character* lose their ground and vanish in this attempt to destroy all the Divine *relations*. A Deity, to be thought of first as a lonely Unity, then self-evolved into a creation, whose material forms are the development of his extension, whose minds

Digitized by Google

of his consciousness, appears to us to be fatally remote from any possible trust, and love, and aspiration in our hearts. We lament, therefore, that our author should have committed himself to such positions as these: that God is "not Personal nor Impersonal" (p. 160); that "our human *personality* gives a false modification to all our conceptions of the infinite" (p. 27); that He is "the reality of all appearance" (p. 164); "the Absolute ground" of "nature" and "the soul" (p. 21); "*the substantiality of matter*" (p. 170); "*the spirituality of spirit*" (p. 182). If God be thus both the essence and the phenomena of matter on the one hand, and of mind on the other, his Being coincides with the whole of the two hemispheres which compose our universe: nothing is left over to *be* matter, or to *be* mind: He and the "All of things" are identified; and scarcely even does the distinction remain between the "*natura naturans*" and the "*natura naturata*." The relation of *Cause and Effect* is exchanged, in the phraseology we have quoted, for that of *Substance and Quality;* and whenever *this* is resorted to in order to represent the connection between God and the world, we are on the traces of a Pantheism far from harmless.

On the whole, the fundamental formulas of the several theories may perhaps be justly presented thus. The prevalent system says: Phenomena require a Cause; Where Law is not, the Cause is God; Where Law is, God *is* not, but *was* the Cause. Pantheism says: Transient phenomena require an Absolute ground, as quality is the predicate

Digitized by Google

of substance; that Absolute ground is God. The scheme which appears to us most true says: Where phenomena are, a Cause is; Cause implies Will; and (within the sphere of our observation) all beyond the range of Human Will is Divine Will. According to the first view, God is, to us, one Cause among many; according to the second, He is one and All; according to the third, He is one of Two.

And now that we have discharged our conscience in this matter, let us say that our protest against Theodore Parker's statements is occasioned more by the probable tendencies of thought in his readers' minds, than by what we suppose to be his own. We do not believe that he is at all deeply tinctured with Pantheism. Expressions drop from him continually which are wholly incompatible with the doctrines we have condemned. He speaks, for instance, of the different orders of things "receiving each as high a mode of divine influence *as its several nature will allow*" (p. 174); and he, therefore, undeniably recognizes some *rerum naturam*, as a condition or *datum* for the reception of divine power. Indeed, the whole spirit and character of the book proclaim its affinities with a school quite remote from the Spinozistic. The author has nowhere stated the principles of his *ethical* doctrine, or bridged over the chasm which separates it from his theology. But the purity and depth of his conceptions of character, his intense abhorrence of falsehood and evil, the moral loftiness of his devotion, and the generous severity of his rebuke, are in the strongest contradiction to serene complacency of a mind, suspended in

Digitized by Google

metaphysic elevation *above* the point where truth and error, right and wrong, diverge, and looking down from a station whence all things appear equally divine. Hear the account he gives of "Solid Piety," or "Love before God":—

"Its Deity is the God of Love, within whose encircling arms it is beautiful to be. The demands it makes are to keep the Law he has written in the heart, to be good, to do good; to love man, to love God. It may use forms, prayers, dogmas, ceremonies, priests, temples, sabbaths, festivals, and fasts, yes, sacrifices if it will, as means, not ends; symbols of a sentiment, not substitutes for it. Its substance is love of God; its form, love of man; its temple, a pure heart; its sacrifice, a divine life. The end it proposes is, to reunite the man with God, till he thinks God's thought, which is Truth; feels God's feeling, which is Love; wills God's will, which is the eternal Right: thus finding God in the sense wherein he is not far from any one of us; becoming one with him, and so partaking the divine nature. The means to this high end are an extinction of all in man that opposes God's law; a perfect obedience to him as he speaks in Reason, Conscience, Affection. It leads through active obedience to an absolute trust, a perfect love; to the complete harmony of the finite man with the infinite God, and man's will coalesces in that of him who is All in All. Then Faith and Knowledge are the same thing, Reason and Revelation do not conflict, Desire and Duty go hand in hand, and strew man's path with flowers. Desire has become dutiful, and Duty desirable. The divine spirit incarnates itself in the man. The riddle of the world is solved. Perfect love casts out fear. Then Religion demands no particular actions, forms, or modes of thought. The man's ploughing is holy as his

Digitized by Google

prayer; his daily bread as the smoke of his sacrifice; his home sacred as his temple; his work-day and his sabbath are alike God's day. His priest is the holy spirit within him; Faith and Works, his communion of both kinds. He does not sacrifice Reason to Religion, nor Religion to Reason. Brother and Sister, they dwell together in Love. A life harmonious and beautiful, conducted by Rectitude, filled full with Truth and enchanted by Love to man and God, — this is the service he pays to the Father of All. Belief does not take the place of life. Capricious austerity atones for no duty left undone. He loves Religion as a bride, for her own sake, not for what she brings. He lies low in the hand of God. The breath of the Father is on him.

"If joy comes to this man, he rejoices in its rosy light. His Wealth, his Wisdom, his Power, is not for himself alone, but for all God's children. Nothing is his which a brother needs more than he. Like God himself, he is kind to the thankless and unmerciful. Purity without and Piety within; these are his Heaven, both present and to come. Is not his flesh as holy as his soul, — his body a temple of God?

"If trouble comes on him, which Prudence could not foresee, nor Strength overcome, nor Wisdom escape from, he bears it with a heart serene and full of peace. Over every gloomy cavern, and den of despair, Hope arches her rainbow; the ambrosial light descends. Religion shows him, that, out of desert rocks, black and savage, where the Vulture has her home, where the Storm and Avalanche are born, and whence they descend, to crush and to kill; out of these hopeless cliffs falls the river of life, which flows for all, and makes glad the people of God. When the Storm and Avalanche sweep from him all that is dearest to mortal hope, is he comfortless? Out of the hard marble of Life, the deposition of a few joys and many sorrows, of

Digitized by Google

birth and death, and smiles and grief, he hews him the beautiful statue of religious Tranquillity. It stands ever beside him, with the smile of heavenly satisfaction on its lip, and its trusting finger pointing to the sky." — B. I. Ch. VII. § 3, p. 145.

The objections which we have brought against our author's Theistical doctrine extend themselves to his views of Inspiration. To examine them, however, within the remaining limits of this article, is impossible. To draw a precise line of discrimination between the Divine and the Human mind, and pronounce, as to the range of our own faculties, what may be included without presumption, and what excluded without enthusiasm, is one of the most difficult problems of religious philosophy. That Dr. Priestley's denial of all Divine Influence, because no miracles could be found going on in the mind, did *not* settle the question, is acknowledged by a piety that is wiser than philosophy, if not by a philosophy that would be wiser than piety. We feel no less assured that Theodore Parker has not settled it, by simply calling the ordinary faculties of men by the name of God's Inspiration, and treating the Principia of Newton as the work of an inspired man. Were we to attempt a solution, we should commence from the division, before stated, of all Agency into the two categories of the Human *Will*, and the Divine Will: we should endeavor to determine the circle of the former; and whatever lay wholly beyond it, though still within the limits of Consciousness and of Law, we should refer to the latter. Not every thing, however, that must be ascribed immediately to God, can

Digitized by Google

be called *Inspiration.* He acts *out of* the Spirit, or in *Nature*, as well as *within* the Spirit, or in our *Soul;* and we must, therefore, again exclude the whole of the former sphere, and reserve only the *characteristic faculties of Man.* If it were maintained that there were a plurality of these, a further reduction might be allowed, till the attribute alone remained which manifests itself in worship, — the consciousness of moral distinctions, and reverence for moral excellence and beauty. Whatever gifts are found in this province of the soul, which are *not* the produce of human will; which have been neither learned nor earned; which, without the touch of any voluntary process, appear in mysterious spontaneity; are strictly the Inspiration of God. Thoughts of God, purposes of constraining pity, sanctities of duty, rising above the level horizon of the mind, silent, self-evidencing, holy, clearing themselves, like the pure stars, as they ascend, of the low mists of doubt and fear, — these will ever be deemed true heaven-lights kindled from the eternal fires, whatever volumes be written to prove them only gas-lamps, distilled from the embers of past pain and pleasure in the transforming alembic of the brain. Inspiration would thus be to the highest faculty what Instinct is to the lower; a guidance coming of its own accord, — which we know cannot lead wrong, yet which we cannot prove to be right. Happily, it needs no proof; for there is the same conscience, latent, though not awake, in all; sunk no doubt in various depths of slumber, but in some ever ready to apprehend and recognize the truth which higher

Digitized by Google

souls may find. To such it passes, telling, as at first, its own divine tale. To others, with whom, when they have heard it in the word, and *seen it in the life*, it does *not* authorize itself, it simply cannot pass at all. "Surely," it will be said, "these are just the cases for a miracle, — and where the Resurrection would powerfully tell." Not in the least; — "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

We differ, then, from our author in this: that he admits, and we exclude, in treating of Inspiration, the *voluntary products* to which the mind gives birth. All learning, all Science, all work in achievement of a preconceived end, we take to be disentitled to the name. In justification of his question, "Is Newton less inspired than Simon Peter?" Theodore Parker, substituting Moses for Simon Peter, observes: —

"No candid man will doubt that, humanly speaking, it was a more difficult thing to write the Principia than the Decalogue. Man must have a nature most sadly anomalous, if, unassisted, he is able to accomplish all the triumphs of modern science, and yet cannot discover the plainest and most important principles of Religion and Morality without a miraculous revelation." — B. II. Ch. VIII. p. 218, note.

Now that the amount of *inspiration* in an achievement should be measured by the *difficulty* and labor spent upon it, appears unreasonable on the principles which we have stated. Let the product be at all of a kind to be yielded by the successive steps of

Digitized by Google

a toilsome process, and it is a thing of voluntary fabrication; and, by those who can so conceive of it, will never be regarded as an inspired creation. The disposition to extend the idea of inspiration to abstract or scientific truth appears also in an attempt, on which we look with strong repugnance, to render Christianity independent of the individuality of Christ. "If," says our author, "Christianity be true at all, it would be just as true if Herod or Catiline had taught it." (p. 244.) Yet the same writer who could set down this painful paradox has said, within thirty pages of it, "A foolish man, as such, cannot be inspired to reveal wisdom; nor a wicked man to reveal virtue; nor an impious man to reveal religion; unto him that hath, more is given. . . . . The greater, purer, loftier, more complete the character, so is the inspiration." (p. 221.) Then surely the suggested combination of a "true Christianity" with a wicked Christ, is no less absurd than it is revolting. If, indeed, as is usually assumed, inspiration implied intellectual infallibility in matters of doctrinal knowledge, and could be evidenced by displays of miraculous power, character *might* be dispensed with in a divine messenger; and the alleged grounds of supernatural authority in the religion would be undisturbed, though its revealer *were* "a Herod or a Catiline." On the principles of this system, the moral perfectness of Christ is not an essential, but a subsidiary, support to Christianity;—a delightful confirmation of his mission, but not a condition on which we are at liberty to stake our faith in him. "Prove what you will against his life,"

Digitized by Google

might it then be said, "his attested doctrine remains." "Prove what you will against his doctrine," would we rather say, "his divine life remains; and with more 'truth' in it, than in any proposition in the Bible or out of it." No revelation of duty is possible except through the Conscience; and Conscience cannot be effectually reached but by the presence of a holier life and a higher spirit. From the spectacle of devoted excellence and saintly beauty of mind, as from nothing else, flashes down upon us the awful and redeemig sense of new obligation: the thing seen in the concrete becomes conviction in the abstract: and a religion lived passes into a religion believed. And so we regard it as a rule in matters of devout faith, that it is *reverence for persons which gives perception of truth in ideas.*

Had our author shared our full persuasion that this rule is true, he would not have diffused his "inspiration" so widely over the human race. Filled with the idea, that religious and moral guidance are the most indispensable of God's gifts, he loosely infers their universality. He is resolved to snatch such precious blessings from all dependence on special causes. He esteems the Reason, Conscience, and religious Sentiment, with which God has endowed us, fully adequate to their manifest end; and has the firmest confidence that every man, faithful to their suggestions, may know what is true of God, love what is good in life, and do what is right in duty. He not only scorns the claim of any possible outward *authority* over these powers, but makes light of any outward helps to them; and though de-

Digitized by Google

voutly thankful for the disclosure in Christ of "the highest possibility of human nature," is anxious to disclaim the kind of *reliance* on him which is usually welcome to the disciple's heart. We confess that this sometimes gives to our author's position an air of Stoical isolation, on which we look, at best, with more admiration than sympathy. Moreover, the doctrine of which it is the result is, we are persuaded, a mistake. Outward sources of religion are just as needful to us as inward faculties; and without the *beings* given to our experience, an utter barrenness would attach to the *constitution* given to our souls. Reason and Conscience are not, as sometimes called, "*the light*," but only the *eye*, of faith; which first has *vision*, when the lustre of pure and great natures is shed on it through the atmosphere of life. Not only are *some* external conditions indispensable to us; but these *human* experiences, and no other; this commerce of souls; this wondering look, to see how greatness and wisdom manage the problem of life. For what is called "Natural Theology," which a man is supposed to get by studying all sorts of things inferior to himself, and making a lonely scientific expedition through earth and air and water, we have but a small esteem. Well as a supplement, it is naught as the substance, of religion. Faith comes, we are persuaded, through the *moral* elements of our nature, by the presence of spiritual causes above us, not by the observation of material effects beneath us. Hence all great religions have been *historical:* the thorough interweaving of all the roots of Christianity with the history of the world

Digitized by Google

on which it has sprung, is at once a source of its power and an assurance of its divineness; and the attempt to give it an abstract character, to loosen its connection with the individuality of Christ, and disengage from it a metaphysical indestructibility called "Absolute Religion," is a mistake, in our opinion, not only of its particular genius, but of the universal springs of human Faith.

In fact, we can find no rest in any view of Revelation short of that which pervades the fourth Gospel, and which is everywhere implicated in the folds of the Logos-doctrine; that it is *an appearance, to beings who have something of a divine spirit within them, of a yet diviner without them, leading them to the Divinest of all, that embraces them both.* No doubt, this conception, while it adheres to the necessity of an historical mediator, generalizes the idea of Inspiration; renders it impossible to affirm, that God has never touched any human heart out of the circle of the Hebrew nation; and leaves to Jesus simply a transcendent preëminence, — the very preëminence claimed for him, that he "had the Spirit without measure" that we can gauge. That this was the doctrine of the Christian Fathers, who did not deny a portion of the divine Logos to the wise and good among the Heathens, is known to every reader of the ancient Apologies,* and ought to protect it in the

* See Justin Mart. Apol. II. cap. 13. *Οὐκ ἀλλότριά ἐστι τὰ Πλάτωνος διδάγματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι πάντη ὅμοια, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων, Στωϊκῶν τε, καὶ ποιητῶν, καὶ συγγραφέων· ἕκαστος γάρ τις ἀπὸ μέρους τοῦ σπερματικοῦ θείου λόγου τὸ συγγενὲς ὁρῶν καλῶς ἐφθέγξατο.*

Digitized by Google

eyes of those who want an authority for their truth more than truth for their authority. And is it not childish to insist on putting out all other lights, in order to make sure that the Christ may shine? Is his glory so doubtful and obscure, that it is discernible only in the dark, and that the faint fires of God, eternal in the human soul, must be damped down, ere we can see the bright and morning star? If the elevation of Jesus is real, it is not changed by filling up the approaches to him with ranks of glorious minds and groups of holy lives, fitted, by the glow of the same spirit and fraternity of the same class, to own him as the Perfecter of their faith, and look up to him in his Kingly height as the crown of their pyramid of souls. That the "authority" of Christ over men should require his cold isolation from men, so that, in his particular characteristics as our guide, he should be extrinsic to our race, is perfectly inconceivable to us. Why, God himself has no "authority" over us, but in virtue of attributes which he has made common to our nature with his own, and in which we are separated from him in degree and not in kind. And where, after all, is the ultimate "authority" of our religion to be found? Who will show us the real seat of the "primitive Christianity" of which all disciples are in quest? Shall we take the first four centuries, and interpret the concurrent tones of their voices into the certain oracle of God? Not so, you say; for the writers of that period were full of the errors prevailing around them: and they themselves refer us to an anterior generation, as imparting legitimacy to the doctrines which they teach.

Digitized by Google

Shall we go, then, to that earlier generation, and abide by the words of the Apostolic age? Scarcely this either, you will say; for the marks are too plain that there is no unerring certainty here: the Apostles themselves were not without their differences; and even their unanimity could mistake, for they confessedly taught the near approach of the end of the world. They, too, still refer us upward, and take every thing from Christ. To Christ, then, let us go. Wherein resides the "authority" in him which we are to accept as "final"? Shall we say, — in his reported *words* wherever found; — his statements are conclusive, and exempt from doubt? Impossible! Who can affirm that he had, and that he uttered, no ideas imbibed from his age, and obsolete when that age was gone; that he grew up to manhood in the Galilean province without a sentiment, an expectation, native to place and time; or that he disrobed himself of his whole natural mind from the instant of his baptism; that he did not discern evil spirits in the poor patients that came to him, and so misinterpret his own miracles; that he raised no hopes in others of sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; of drinking with him of the fruit of the vine at his table in his kingdom; and of his own return to fulfil all these things "within that generation"? Will any one plainly say, with these things before him, that Jesus was infallible, and that in his spoken language we have a standard of doctrinal truth? And if error was possible, who will give us an *external* test by which we may know the region of its absence and of its presence? for, with-

Digitized by Google

out this, to talk of his words being "a rule of faith" is a delusion or a pretence. But why this Heathenish craving for an "oracle," turning the Galilean hills into a Delphi, Jesus into a Pythoness, and degrading the Gospels into Sibylline books? Did Christ ask for this blind, implicit trust? Did he wish his disciples to believe his word, because it was true, — or the truth, because it was his word? Nay, did not *he* also refer us to something higher, and hint at an authority needful to authorize his own? Thither, then, we must retreat, if indeed we would find "Primitive Christianity." Behind all the *communicated* beliefs of Jesus lie his *felt* beliefs, with the question, "What made them his?" Whence his holy trust in them? for in his soul, also, they had a justifying origin. He thought them, he loved them, he worshipped in them, he struggled under them, before he published them: by what mark did he know them to be divine? Does any one really suppose that he would refuse to believe them, unless his senses could have a physical demonstration, unless the Infinite Spirit would talk audibly with him in the vernacular tongue, and give him His word for them, and show off some proof-miracles to satisfy his doubts? And if it were found out that there was no breach of the Eternal Silence, no phantasms floating between the uplifted eye of the Nazarene and the quiet stars, would you say that it was all over with our faith, and its divine original clean gone? Surely not. It will not be questioned that the Inspiration of Jesus was *within* the soul: by the powers that dwelt there, he knew the thoughts to be divine and holy as they

Digitized by Google

dropped on his meditations: and the authorizing point of all his treasures of heavenly truth and grace dwelt in his Reason, Conscience, and Faith. Here, then, is the fountain of all, the primitive seat of inspiration, the true *religion of Christ*, — that which he *felt and followed*, not that which he *spake and led*. And those are the most genuine disciples, who stand with him at the same spring; who are ready for the same trust; and can disengage themselves from tradition, pretence, and fear, at the bidding of the same source of Inspiration.

The critical opinions of Theodore Parker on the origin and contents of the Hebrew and Christian records, we do not propose to discuss. Indeed, they are so cursorily presented in his book, that to examine the grounds of them would be to travel far beyond the materials before us. His judgment on the historical evidence for the miracles has been the subject of comment in a former article. In that judgment we do not concur. But if there is any one who, for that judgment, chooses to denounce him as "no Christian"; who conceives that a literary verdict, referring the Gospels to the second century instead of the first, outlaws a man from "the kingdom of God"; who can read this book, and suppose in his heart that here is a man whom Jesus would have driven from the company of disciples; we can only wish that the accuser's title to the name were as obvious as the accused's. Alas for this poor wrangling! To hear the boastful anger of our stout believers, one would suppose that to take up our faith on too easy terms, and to be drawn into dis-

Digitized by Google

cipleship less by logic than by love, were the very Sin against the Holy Ghost! Jesus thought it might not be too much to expect of his *enemies*, that, being eyewitnesses, they might "believe *his works*"; but of his friends it was the mark, that they would "believe *him*." But now-a-days, who are our "patient Christians," ever busy with indictments against all counterfeits? Why, men who think it supremely ridiculous to accept any thing or being as divine, unless visible certificates of character be written on earth, air, and water, and Heaven will pawn the laws of nature as personal securities.

We part with Theodore Parker in hope to meet again. He has, we are persuaded, a task, severe perhaps, but assuredly noble, to achieve in this world. The work we have reviewed is the confession, at the threshold of a high career, of a great Reforming soul, that has thus cleared itself of hinderance, and girded up itself for a faithful future. The slowness of success awaiting those who stand apart from the multitude will not dismay him. He knows the ways of Providence too well: —

"Institutions arise as they are needed, and fall when their work is done. Of these things nothing is fixed. Corporeal despotism is getting ended; will the spiritual tyranny last for ever? A will above our puny strength marshals the race of men, using our freedom, virtue, folly, as instruments to one vast end, — the harmonious development of man. We see the art of God in the web of the spider, and the cell of a bee, but have not skill to discern it in the march of man. We repine at the slowness of the future in coming, or the swiftness of the past in fleeing away;

Digitized by Google

we sigh for the fabled 'Millennium' to advance, or pray Time to restore us the Age of Gold. It avails nothing. We cannot hurry God, nor retard him. Old schools and new schools seem as men that stand on the shore of some Atlantic bay, and shout, to frighten back the tide, or urge it on. What boots their cry? Gently the sea swells under the moon, and, in the hour of God's appointment, the tranquil tide rolls in, to inlet and river, to lave the rocks, to bear on its bosom the ship of the merchant, the weeds of the sea. We complain, as our fathers; let us rather rejoice, for questions less weighty than these have in other ages been settled only with the point of the sword and the thunder of cannon.

"If the opinions advanced in this discourse be correct, then Religion is above all institutions, and can never fail: they shall perish, but Religion endure; they shall wax old as a garment; they shall be changed, and the places that knew them shall know them no more for ever; but Religion is ever the same, and its years shall have no end." —p. 484.

Digitized by Google

PHASES OF FAITH.*

[From the Prospective Review for August, 1850.]

THIS book is a necessary Appendix to the author's former Treatise on the Soul. In that work he presented a scheme of positive Religion, founded essentially on psychological experience, and asking for no data beyond the mind's own consciousness in the exercise of its highest affections. Its object and method were constructive: and in evolving an adequate faith from the inner life of human spirit, he could spare only an incidental notice for doctrines and modes of procedure at variance with his own. He there unfolded the truths which respect our spiritual relations according to the order in which, as he conceives, they ought to be thought out. This, however, is not the order in which he himself has actually reached them; still less does it agree with the ordinary path of approach to them. All Christians conceive themselves indebted to an historical revelation, concurrently with the intimations of their

---

* Phases of Faith: or Passages from the History of my Creed. By Francis William Newman, formerly Fellow of Baliol College, Oxford. London: Chapman. 1850.

Digitized by Google

own nature, for their most inspiring convictions: and with Mr. Newman himself, they are not a fresh acquisition won by his present mode of thought, but a residue left uncancelled by the mental changes through which he has passed, and provided by an after-thought with their new title to continued possession. The present publication describes the processes by which the author, from a commencement in Calvinism, reached at length the religion of "The Soul." It contains his apology for dispensing entirely with all external aids, — miracle or prophecy, Bible or Church, — in the establishment of a Faith; and for limiting himself to sources purely subjective. It defends his isolated position by tracing the involuntary encroachments of scepticism, as reflection and knowledge increased and imparted a freer action to his mind; till the ever-narrowing circumference of his ecclesiastical and Scriptural belief drove him at last upon his own centre, and left him as a point alone amid the infinitude of God. As the course of change was exceedingly gradual, and every stage of it is successively vindicated, the book is necessarily a kind of running criticism on almost every Christian creed, and the whole circle of Christian evidences; and elicits in each case a negative result. By this aggressive process nothing is brought out of which Mr. Newman's previous book had not given ample notice. Yet to most of his readers this wholly destructive character will assuredly be painful; and many who, with ourselves, have been penetrated with affectionate admiration for his transparent truthfulness and elevation of soul, will feel it a sor-

Digitized by Google

row to lose the sympathy of such a mind in some of their most cherished persuasions. The earlier treatise so abounded in passages of solemn and tender devotion, that the reader was borne on the wing over the chasms in its faith, and no more felt its doubts than he would pause upon a heresy let fall in prayer. But the present work cannot, from its very nature, bespeak the affections by any such preëngagement. It is rigorously logical: and though the author's fearlessness is manifestly the simple inspiration of a pure and trustful heart, yet the relentless way in which he follows out a single line of thought, and hurries you along it as if it were the whole surface of the truth, provokes something of natural resistance. You feel yourself in the presence of a mind wholly incapable of the least moral unfairness or ingenious self-deception, and devoted with absolute singleness to the quest of the true and the good: but, at the same time, too much distinguished by intellectual impetuosity, and the intense flow of sympathies in one particular channel, to attain a judicial largeness of view. Hence the work produces all its effect at once: and while many will utter warnings against reading it at all, our counsel would be to read it *twice*. For ourselves at least we must confess that, where our admiration and even reverence are so strongly enlisted, we are apt to be carried away at first beyond the bounds of our permanent convictions; to take over-precautions against our own prejudgments; and yield ourselves too freely to the hand of a guidance felt to be generous and noble: and it requires time and calm review to re-

Digitized by Google

cover from the mingled self-distrust and sympathy with which such companionship as our author's inspires us.

To the earlier part of this book singular freshness is given by its autobiographical form, and the perfect simplicity with which it lays open every state of mind bearing on the subsequent developments of opinion. The sketch so slightly given of the thoughtful and serious schoolboy, derided by hearts yet free from the claim of God, and comforted by the kindly clergyman who could read the spirit at work within; of the youth at Confirmation, chilled by the dry questions of the Examiner, and repelled by the sleeves and formality of the Bishop; of the Freshman at Oxford, signing the Articles in all the joy of passionate belief, and then finding that among companions they were objects of general indifference; will wake in many a heart affecting memories of life's most fervid and fruitful hours. How far his religious life might have found a less troubled development, had it commenced under a simpler scheme of doctrine, we will not pretend to decide. But it is evident that so active an intellect, inclosed within the complicated economy of Calvinism, gave his faith no chance of long repose: and during his undergraduate course many questions had arisen, on the imputation of Christ's righteousness, on the obligation of the Sabbath, on the ground of difference between the Mosaic sacrifices and the Christian Atonement, on the meaning of the words "One" and "Three" in the Athanasian Creed, all of which he had answered in an unorthodox sense. But,

Digitized by Google

above all, he had given up the doctrine of Infant Baptism, and on this account was almost deterred from the re-signature essential to his Bachelor's degree. Though he overcame his scruples thus far, they exercised a most important influence on the subsequent course of his life; deterring him from entering the Church; determining (we imagine) the class of Christians (the Baptists) whose communion he was afterwards to join; and bringing out for the first time that strong contrast between the brothers Newman, which has become so striking in its results. We have often heard the remark, that the radical characteristics of these two men are essentially the same; that the great problem of faith presented itself under like conditions to both; that their solutions, opposite as they seem, exhaust the logical alternative of the case, and are but the positive and negative roots of one equation; and that, but for accidental causes, or the overbalance of a casual feeling, their paths might never have diverged. Upon the evidence of their writings, this estimate has always appeared to us curiously false: and a passage in the present volume, which exhibits the divergence at its commencement, corrects the opinion in a manner deeply instructive. Speaking of his crisis of difficulty respecting Baptism, our author says:—

"One person there was at Oxford who might have seemed my natural adviser: his name, character, and religious peculiarities have been so made public property, that I need not shrink to name him:—I mean my elder brother, the Rev. John Henry Newman. As a warm-hearted and generous brother, who exercised towards me paternal cares,

Digitized by Google

I esteemed him and felt a deep gratitude; as a man of various culture and peculiar genius, I admired and was proud of him; but my doctrinal religion impeded my loving him as much as he deserved, and even justified my feeling some distrust of him. He never showed any strong attraction towards those whom I regarded as spiritual persons: on the contrary, I thought him stiff and cold towards them. Moreover, soon after his ordination, he had startled and distressed me by adopting the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; and, in rapid succession, worked out views which I regarded as full-blown 'Popery.' I speak of the years 1823 – 6: it is strange to think that twenty years more had to pass before he learnt the place to which his doctrines belonged.

"In the earliest period of my Oxford residence, I fell into uneasy collision with him concerning Episcopal powers. I had on one occasion dropt something disrespectful against Bishops or a Bishop, something which, if it had been said about a Clergyman, would have passed unnoticed; but my brother checked and reproved me, — as I thought very uninstructively, — for 'wanting reverence towards Bishops.' I knew not then, and I know not now, why Bishops, *as such*, should be more reverenced than common clergymen; or Clergymen, *as such*, more than common men. . . . . I was willing to honor a Lord Bishop as a Peer of Parliament, but his office was to me no guaranty of spiritual eminence. To find my brother thus stop my mouth, was a puzzle; and impeded all free speech towards him." — p. 10.

Whence this incapacity for sympathy between two minds, both noble, both affectionate, trained in the same home, enriched by the same culture, intent upon the same ends? With reasoning powers equally acute, and equally uncorrupted by passion or

Digitized by Google

by self, they could not have found concurrence impossible, had it been within the resources of logic or of faithfulness. The difference, we are persuaded, ascends behind these, and lies in the original data from which each inquirer proceeded as his primary conditions of belief: and we conceive that difference to be one which radically separates Catholic from Evangelical Churches, rendering their approximation intrinsically impossible, and limiting each to the range of one class of minds. A passing remark of our author's unconsciously opens to us the seat of this difference.

"For any one to avow that Regeneration took place in Baptism, *seemed to me little short of a confession that he had never himself experienced what Regeneration is.*" — p. 15.

The new birth, — that is to say, — is something which must be *felt*, and felt under riper conditions than those of the infant Soul; felt as a lifted weight of sin, a broken bondage of self, a free surrender to the will of a forgiving God. This reconciliation of heart, this joyful spring of free affection into the infinite arms, is a fact in the history of thousands: and to him who knows it, it is vain to speak of any other Regeneration. To tell him that the sprinkled babe, in whom he sees nothing supervene, and who is evidently conscious of nothing but the water-drops, undergoes the stupendous change of a Divine adoption, seems to him to degrade the Economy of Heaven to a level with the arts of conjuring. When God breaks into the human soul, shall it be without a trace? Must he not shake it to its cen-

Digitized by Google

tre? and as he obliterates its guilt, shall there be no sense of clearness, and no tears of joy to make a fruitful place for every seed of holiness? Thus the Evangelical insists on *consciousness* as an indispensable evidence of a divine change; and can accept nothing as *spiritual* except what declares itself within the human spirit, and exalts its highest action: and further, the kind of experience for which he looks is not possible to every mind, but is incident especially to passionate and impulsive souls. Not all good men, however, are formed in this mould: many who devoutly seek a union with God, and who believe a new birth to be the prerequisite condition, are never vividly conscious of any Divine irruption for the emancipation of their nature: and for the erasure of guilt and the visitation of grace they must look back beyond the period of memory to the cradle of their life, and its earliest consecration: when they were born of water, they were doubtless born of the spirit too. True the saving touch was reported to them by no feeling: but are there not secret workings of God? and shall we deny Him because his approach is gentle, and his spirit, instead of tearing us in storm, spreads through us insensibly like a purifying atmosphere? What hinders him from redeeming and improving a nature that knows not its benefactor except by faith? If his presence lurks throughout unconscious Nature, and is the unfelt source of all the beauty, life, and order there, by what right can we affirm that his Spirit cannot evade our consciousness? According to this view, which dispenses with the evidence of personal expe-

Digitized by Google

rience, the Soul, in the reception of grace, is regarded externally, as a natural object submitted to the disinfecting influence of God: and the Divine Spirit is treated as a kind of *physical* power of transcendent efficacy, — or at least as an agency permeating physical natures, and so refining them as to transfigure them into spiritual life. No exact boundary is here drawn between the realm of sense and that of spirit, — between the material energy and the moral interposition of God; — they melt into one another under the mediation of a kind of spiritual chemistry, descending into organic force on the one hand, and rising into the inspiration of holiness on the other. This appears to us to be the conception which underlies the peculiarities of Catholicism. Hence the invariable presence of some physical element in all that it looks upon as venerable. Its rites are a manipular invocation of God. Its miracles are examples of incarnate divineness in old clothes and winking pictures. Its ascetic discipline is founded on the notion of a gradual consumption of the grosser body by the encroaching fire of the spirit; till in the estatica the frame itself becomes ethereal, and the light shines through. Nothing can be more offensive than all this to the Evangelical conception; which plants the natural and the spiritual in irreconcilable contradiction, denies to them all approach or contact, and allows each to exist only by the extinction of the other. They belong virtually to opposite influences, — of Satan and of God. They follow opposite methods, — of necessary law and of free grace. They are cognizable by opposite faculties, — of sense

Digitized by Google

and understanding on the one hand; of the soul upon the other. This unmediated dualism follows the Evangelical into his theory as to the state of each individual soul before God. The Catholic does not deny all divine light to the natural conscience or all power to the natural will of unconverted men: he maintains that these also are already under a law of obligation, may do what is well pleasing before God, and by superior faithfulness qualify themselves to become subjects of grace; so that the Gospel shall come upon them as a divine supplement to the sad and feeble moral life of nature. To the Evangelical, on the contrary, the soul that is not saved is lost; the corruption before regeneration, and the sanctification after it, are alike complete and without degree; and the best works of the unconverted, far from having any tendency to bring them to Christ, are of the nature of sin. So, again, the contrast turns up in the opposite views taken of the divine economy in human affairs. The Evangelical detaches the elect in his imagination from the remaining mass of men, sequesters them as a holy people, who must not mix themselves with the affairs of Belial. He withdraws the Church from the world, and watches lest any bridge of transition should smooth the way for a mingling of their feelings and pursuits. The more spiritual he is, the more will he abstain from political action, and find the whole business of government to be made up of problems which he cannot touch. The Catholic, looking on the natural universe, whether material or human, not as the antagonist, but as the receptacle, of the spiritual, seeks to

Digitized by Google

conquer the World for the Church, and, instead of shunning political action, is ready to grasp it as his instrument. As the Gospel is, in his view, but the supplement to natural Law, so is the Church but the climax of Government, — a Divine Polity for ruling the world in affairs of Religion. It was for want of this view that the younger Newman, while able to honor a Bishop "*as a Peer of Parliament*," (irrespective of the legislative faculties of the individual,) could pay no homage to his *church functions*, but, the moment he turned to these, looked only at the personal qualities of the man. The elder brother, preserving the analogy between the temporal and the spiritual constitution of the human world, recognized a corporate rule for both relations; and saw no reason why, if *office* were a ground of reverence in an earthly polity, it should have no respect in a divine. We might carry this comparison of the two schemes into much greater detail, without any straining of its fundamental principle. But we must content ourselves with the summary statement that, while (1.) the worldly and unreligious live wholly in the natural and ignore the spiritual; and (2.) the Evangelical lives wholly in the spiritual as incompatible with the natural; (3.) the Catholic seeks to subjugate the natural (as he conceives God does) by interpenetration of the spiritual. The tendency to the one or the other of these religious conceptions marks the distinction between two great families of minds. The more impulsive and loving natures, whose good and evil are alike remote from self, — who find it an ill business to manage themselves, but can do all

Digitized by Google

things by the inspiration of affection, — who detest prudence and are perverse against authority, but are docile as a child to one that trusts them with his tenderness, — are necessarily drawn to the Evangelical side. Where the Will, on the other hand, has a greater strength, and the Conscience a minuter vigilance; where emotion is less susceptible of extremes, and persistent disicpline is more possible; there religion will appear to be less a conquest of the soul by Divine aggression, than a home administration quietly propagated from within; and the Catholic (which is also the Unitarian) conception will prevail. Intellectual power may attach itself indifferently to either side. But, if we mistake not, the imaginative faculty can scarcely coexist in any high degree with the Evangelical type of thought. Its tendency on this side is always to *romance*, which is the invariable sign of feeble imagination; inasmuch as it totally separates the real from the ideal, and keeps them apart like two worlds to be occupied in turns, — the dull and earthly, — the glorious and divine. In the Catholic theory, where the perceptive powers are less despised, and the natural and physical world is deemed not incapable of being the receptacle of God, the sense of Beauty has free range: it mediates betwen the spheres that else would lie apart, detects the ideal *in* the real, and, like a golden sunset on the smoke-cloud of a city, glorifies the very soil of earth with heavenly light. We are convinced that to some want of fulness in this department of our author's mind must be attributed many of the most questionable sentiments characteristic of his

Digitized by Google

book; — especially his impatience at the historical details of the life of Christ, and his eagerness to hide the mysterious Jesus behind the clouds of heaven. Describing his impressions on first making the acquaintance of a Unitarian, he says: —

"I now discovered that there was a deeper distaste in me for the details of the human life of Christ than I was previously conscious of; a distaste which I found out by a reaction from the minute interest felt in such details by my new friend. For several years more, I did not fully understand how and why this was; viz. that *my religion had always been Pauline.* Christ was to me the ideal of glorified human nature, but I needed some dimness in the portrait to give play to my imagination: if drawn too sharply historical, it sank into commonplace and caused a revulsion of feeling. As all paintings of the miraculous used to displease and even disgust me from a boy by the unbelief which they inspired; so if any one dwelt on the special proofs of tenderness and love exhibited in certain words or actions of Jesus, it was apt to call out in me a sense, that from day to day equal kindness might often be met. The imbecility of preachers, who would dwell on such words as 'Weep not,' as if nobody else ever uttered such, has always annoyed me. I felt it impossible to obtain a worthy idea of Christ from studying any of the details reported concerning him. If I dwelt too much on these, I got a finite object; but I yearned for an infinite one: hence my preference for John's mysterious Jesus." — p. 102.

We are far from asserting that the Unitarians are a peculiarly imaginative people: and the disposition, criticized by our author, to magnify small and inexpressive traits, is a sure indication of defect in

Digitized by Google

that feeling of proportion which imagination always involves. But the tendency to unbelief in looking at pictorial representations of miracle; the inability to find an ideal unity in the real Jesus of Nazareth, or to see in that gracious and majestic form the spiritual glory for which the heart craves; and the apparent admission that *any thing* realized, any thing "too sharply historical," thereby must "sink into commonplace and cause a revulsion of feeling"; appear to us curiously to illustrate the un-idealizing character of the Evangelical mind, and its tendency to run into romance. We have not hesitated to dwell on the distinct mental bases of the rival systems of religion, because, without reference to them, many of the experiences recorded in this volume can scarcely be interpreted, or its conclusions estimated aright. If the subject has brought us too near to personal criticism, our apology must be, that, where great questions of faith are discussed in the form of self-revelations from an individual mind, the idiosyncrasy of the narrator is necessarily drawn in among the elements of the argument.

The close of his Oxford course left Mr. Newman fresh from the impression of Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, — an enthusiastical and somewhat exclusive disciple of the Pauline Christianity. He was thus prepared, on his removal to a tutorship in Wicklow, to fall under the powerful influence of a devoted Evangelical missionary, of whom, under the designation of "the Irish Clergyman," a striking picture is presented. Negligent of his person, careless of his health, casting down in service of the cross the wealth of intel-

Digitized by Google

lect and culture, this crippled devotee acquired, by force of will and high faithfulness of life, an ascendency, like that of an apostle, over our author's mind. As the theory of this saintly man led him to scorn every pursuit that withdrew him from prayer and missionary toil, and to discard every book except the Bible, so, by the exercise of voluntary poverty and an unsparing self-sacrifice to the spiritual interests of the peasantry, did his practice severely realize his belief. It was doubtless this solid and absolute sincerity which led captive a soul like Mr. Newman's, — so profoundly truth-loving, yet at that time tremulous perhaps with the consciousness of intellectual tastes and social interests at variance with the spiritual concentration required by his creed. The overpowering impression of this new friend's character at once inspired him with a wish to engage in a mission to the heathen, and deepened in his mind the conviction, that the great instrument of conversion must be sought, not in conclusive arguments, but in persuasive lives; that the critical and learned evidences on which the miraculous claims of Christianity are made to rest are too unwieldy to be generally efficacious; and that the *moral* appeal of the Gospel to the conscience must be the main reliance for evangelizing the world. To embody this appeal in an actual church or fraternity planted upon Pagan soil, and silently appearing there in all the expressiveness of Christian purity, patience, and loving self-denial, became our author's single desire: and in 1830 he went out to Bagdad to join himself to a community of Evangelical emi-

Digitized by Google

grants already established there with similar views under the influence of Mr. Groves. During a two years' residence in Persia began the series of corrosions upon the strict orthodoxy of his creed, under which, after another period, the whole system of Calvinism collapsed. The logical activity of his intellect worked, for the present, entirely *within* the limits of the Evangelical scheme, and in complete submission to the letter of Scripture. The first weakness detected — the only one during absence in the East — affected the doctrine of the Trinity. He found it impossible to reconcile the manifest subordination of the Son to the Father in the theology of Paul and John with the definitions of the Athanasian Creed. The considerations and the texts which forced this conviction upon him, like most of the trains of thought by which he passed to ulterior results, are familiar to all who have any acquaintance with the Unitarian controversy, and need not be presented here. Our author rested for a while in the Nicene doctrine of the *derived* nature of the Son, yet his homogeneity with the Father. While this dogmatic direction was prominently engaging his attention, it is plain that an under-current of thought, charged with most momentous tendencies, was already in motion; — a course of reflection on the logic of religious evidence, and the unmanageable nature of external proof in relation to spiritual truth. The following incident is rich in suggestion: —

"While we were at Aleppo, I one day got into religious discourse with a Mohammedan carpenter, which left on me a lasting impression. Among other matters, I was pe-

Digitized by Google

culiarly desirous of disabusing him of the current notion of his people, that our Gospels are spurious narratives of late date. I found great difficulty of expression; but the man listened to me with much attention, and I was encouraged to exert myself. He waited patiently till I had done, and then spoke to the following effect:—'I will tell you, Sir, how the case stands. God has given to you English a great many good gifts. You make fine ships and sharp penknives, and good cloth and cottons, and you have rich nobles and brave soldiers; and you write and print many learned books (dictionaries and grammars): all this is of God. But there is one thing that God has withheld from you, and has revealed to us; and that is, the knowledge of the true religion, by which one may be saved.' When he thus ignored my argument (which was probably quite unintelligible to him), and delivered his simple protest, I was silenced, and at the same time amused. But the more I thought it over, the more instruction I saw in the case. His position towards me was exactly that of a humble Christian towards an unbelieving philosopher; nay, that of the early Apostles or Jewish prophets towards the proud, cultivated, wordly-wise, and powerful heathen. This not only showed the vanity of any argument to him, except one purely addressed to his moral and spiritual faculties; but it also indicated to me that ignorance has its spiritual self-sufficiency as well as erudition; and that if there is a Pride of Reason, so is there a Pride of Unreason. But though this rested in my memory, it was not long before I worked out all the results of that thought." — p. 52.

The love among saintly hearts is deep: but in the same proportion their jealousy is quick. No detective police has a vigilance so keen as the instinct of orthodoxy. On Mr. Newman's returning to England

Digitized by Google

in hope of swelling the numbers of the Persian Mission, he had not performed his quarantine on board the ship before he found that rumors of his unsoundness in the faith had preceded him. The usual results followed: for in these cases, where there is nothing to be forgiven, Christians never forgive. Having spoken at some religious meetings, — unordained as he was, — he was cut off by his brother. Writing to the Irish clergyman to acknowledge his Nicene tendency, and to ask for an Athanasian explanation of the text, "To us there is but one God, the Father," — he was peremptorily, and on pain of alienated friendship, desired to confess that "the Father" meant "the Trinity."

"The Father meant the Trinity!! For the first time I perceived, that so vehement a champion of the sufficiency of the Scripture, so stanch an opposer of Creeds and Churches, was wedded to an extra-Scriptural creed of his own, by which he tested the spiritual state of his brethren. I was in despair, and like a man thunderstruck. I had nothing more to say. Two more letters from the same hand I saw, the latter of which was to threaten some new acquaintances who were kind to me, (persons wholly unknown to him,) that, if they did not desist from sheltering me, and break off intercourse, they should, as far as his influence went, themselves everywhere be cut off from Christian communion and recognition. This will suffice to indicate the sort of social persecution through which, after a succession of struggles, I found myself separated from persons whom I had trustingly admired, and on whom I had most counted for union: with whom I fondly believed myself bound up for eternity; of whom some were my previously intimate friends, while for others, even on slight ac-

Digitized by Google

quaintance, I would have performed menial offices, and thought myself honored; whom I still looked upon as the blessed and excellent of the earth, and the special favorites of Heaven; whose company (though oftentimes they were considerably my inferiors either in rank or in knowledge and cultivation) I would have chosen in preference to that of nobles; whom I loved solely because I thought them to love God, and of whom I asked nothing, but that they would admit me as the meanest and most frail of disciples. My heart was ready to break: I wished for a woman's soul, that I might weep in floods. O Dogma! Dogma! how dost thou trample under foot love, truth, conscience, justice! Was ever a Moloch worse than thou? Burn me at the stake; then Christ will receive me, and saints beyond the grave will love me, though the saints here know me not. But now I am alone in the world; I can trust no one. The new acquaintances who barely tolerated me, and old friends whom reports have not reached (if such there be), may turn against me with animosity to-morrow, as those have done from whom I could least have imagined it. Where is union? Where is the Church which was to convert the heathen?" — p. 58.

So bitter an experience cannot befall a sensitive and trusting soul, without driving it with sadness in upon itself, and shutting it up in a kind of lonely love, amid the sufficing sympathy of God. A heart of noble faith cannot, indeed, like the worldly who have nothing in them that will *keep*, be soured by such disappointment; and will even turn into a fruitful sorrow what to the others is an acrid poison eating to the very pith of life. But still, cruelty and injustice cannot go for nothing, or, by the miraculous touch of ever so divine a spirit, be transmuted into

Digitized by Google

only good. And there is a *religious* type of the unhappy influence produced by mortified hope, — a resolute isolation of soul, lofty towards men, that its tenderness may be reserved entire for God; — a jealous zeal against the idols of the mind; — and too quick an apprehension of thraldom from every affection that comes with offers of mediation between earth and heaven. Some traces of such a mood we do think apparent in Mr. Newman's later course of thought, — an excessive resolve not to be imposed upon by conventional or got-up feelings, — a prosaic, not to say embittered, estimate of human nature, — and a slowness to lay the heart freely open to reverential admiration. If it be so, it is but too high-strained a faithfulness to this noble vow and sweet submission: —

"The resolution then rose within me, to love all good men from a distance, but never again to count on permanent friendship with any one who was not himself cast out as a heretic. Nor, in fact, did the storm of distress which these events inflicted on me subside, until I willingly received the task of withstanding it as God's trial whether I was faithful. As soon as I gained strength to say, 'O my Lord, I will bear not this only, *but more also*, for thy sake, for conscience, and for truth,' — my sorrows vanished until the next blow and the next inevitable pang. At last my heart had died within me, the bitterness of death was past. I was satisfied to be hated by the saints, and to reckon that those who had not yet turned against me would not bear me much longer. Then I conceived the belief, that, if we may not make a heaven on earth for ourselves out of the love of saints, it is in order that we may find a truer heaven in God's love." — p. 63.

Digitized by Google

The consciousness of unjust treatment had the salutary effect of raising in our author's esteem the simple virtues of the good natural heart; the kindly presence of which would have protected him against the social persecution brought to bear upon him. He knew that the friends who were casting him off were persons of deeply devout minds. He knew that they did him cruel wrong. And this combination forced upon him the certainty, "that spirituality is no adequate security for sound moral discernment." A kindlier disposition grew up towards the common world of men, in whom the moral sentiments had not exalted themselves into religion: and a course of new thought arose, merging at last in the perception that Religion is but the culminating meridian of Morals, and God approachable only by the aim at infinite excellence. It was plain, too, that those who did violence to their amiable nature in fancied obedience to the requirements of the Bible, easily fell into crooked and narrow ways: so that, be the Scripture rule ever so unerring, it needs either an infallible guide, or a right mind, to interpret and apply it. No inroad, however, had yet been made upon our author's reliance on the sacred writings, as oracles of supreme and perfect truth; or upon any portion of Calvinistic economy of salvation. The new force given to the moral sentiments revived an old aversion to the doctrine of reprobation, and rendered him so dissatisfied with the appeal to Sovereign Might in answer to objections springing from the sense of justice, that even Paul's authority, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

Digitized by Google

could not stifle his repugnance. In an understanding thus disposed, in which Arbitrary and Infinite Will has ceased to afford a solid basis, it is plain that the whole Genevan system is undermined; and accordingly it rapidly became a mass of ruins. First, some stealthy glances at (we presume) Dr. Southwood Smith's Treatise on the Divine Government, in the library of an orthodox friend, opened up the question of eternal punishment: and the doctrine was discarded on grounds both critical and moral. Next, the Deity of Christ was lowered another step, from the consideration that a *derived* being must be derived *in time*, and cannot be co-eternal with his Source: and then another step again, in order to save some doctrine of Atonement, and obtain a *dead* Christ on Calvary, — which could not be if his nature were beyond the Arian measure. Finally, the entailment of moral corruption on the posterity of Adam is discovered to be without support from Scripture, and intrinsically absurd: and the depravity of human nature is reduced to the historically attested fact of wide-spread moral evil. Upon all these topics the narrative abounds with terse and animated reasonings. Their freshness, however, is mainly due to the directness with which they proceed from the independent action of our author's mind. In themselves they are not new to persons so far gone in heresy as our readers are likely to be: and we quit this part of our work with one citation. It contains an important testimony on behalf of an opinion, exceedingly startling to Unitarians, but, as we have long been convinced, radically sound. Mr.

Digitized by Google

Newman is speaking of his state of mind when he had resolved the riddle of the Trinity, and become — in worship — Unitarian: —

"After all, could I seriously think, that morally and spiritually I was either better or worse for this discovery? I could not pretend that I was.

"This showed me that, if a man of partially unsound and visionary mind made the angel Gabriel a *fourth person* in the Godhead, it might cause no difference whatever in the actings of his spirit. The great question would be, whether he ascribed the same moral perfection to Gabriel as to the Father. If so, to worship him would be no degradation to the soul; even if absolute omnipotence were not attributed, nay, nor a past eternal existence. It thus became clear to me, that Polytheism, *as such*, is not a moral and spiritual, but at most only an intellectual error: and that its practical evil consists in worshipping beings whom we represent to our imaginations as morally imperfect. Conversely, one who imputes to God sentiments and conduct which in man he would call capricious or cruel, such a one, even if he be as Monotheistic as a Mussulman, admits into his soul the whole virus of Idolatry." — p. 89.

This crisis in Mr. Newman's course of thought, when his orthodoxy was gone, but his faith in the authority of Scripture remained intact, was highly favorable for his introduction to the Unitarian conception of Christianity: and it so happened that just then he made the acquaintance of a professor of that faith, evidently qualified, by tenderness and piety of spirit, as well as by familiarity with the theology of his church, to represent the system in its most attractive form. It had, however, no charm

Digitized by Google

for our author, whose training had been too exclusively Pauline to remove its Holy of Holies into the Gospels; who could not take up with the Judaical Messiah of Matthew, especially with the loss of the first chapters, by which alone the human Jesus could show title to be Lord of the living and the dead, and competency to stand forth as the moral image of God. So he passed this sect by, and pursued his way; taking up now a new set of researches: no longer trying dogmas by the test of Scripture; but trying Scripture by the test of History, Science, Criticism, and all the relevant fixed points in human knowledge. The question has long been struggling for attention in his mind, what was the just boundary between the authority of the letter and the rights of the spirit, — between revealed and natural religion. The *principle* on which, while yet a student, he had provisionally decided it, is the only one of which the case admits: he had consulted the *competency* of the human reason and conscience in matters of religion; and only beyond the limits of that competency had allowed miraculous attestation to possess oracular rights. In the *application* of this principle, however, lay the real difficulty: and here, as he freely allows, he had fallen into some vacillation and inconsistency. As the process of Evangelical *conversion* begins with appealing to the sense of sin, and relies on the fears and despair incident to conscious alienation from God, his creed had obliged him to assume, among the data of the natural mind, a perception of right and wrong, a knowledge of God as Holy, and an anticipation of retributive jus-

Digitized by Google

tice. From this it would seem irresistibly to follow, that *the whole* of the *moral* elements of religion are within the reach of the human apprehension: for the consciousness which reports to us our alienation cannot be insensible to its removal: and if in the one case it forecasts the shadow of penal suffering, it cannot but throw forward in the other the promissory light of immortal joy. Yet this brighter half of the truth, — comprising the scheme of human *recovery*, — Mr. Newman had set down as beyond the ken of all our faculties; regarding the Atonement, the Reconciliation, and the Life Eternal, as *outward facts* of the supernatural kind, cognizable only by miraculous media of attestation. The two lists of truths, professedly separated from each other as respectively internal and external, — subjective conditions and objective facts, — by no means answer to this classification. The peace and hope of a reconciled mind are as truly matters of spiritual experience as the fever and terror of guilt: and on the other hand, the existence and Providence of God are no less objective facts than the life after death. Moreover, while in theory the only function reserved for revelation was the communication of "external truths," — the internal and spiritual being left to nature, — the main practical reason for clinging to the miraculous had been a distrust of the *depraved moral perceptions* of man. Thus they are first set up as our sole reporters of internal truths, and then put down as untrustworthy: and, to check and correct them, we are referred to an informant whose cognizance is limited to the external. Whether some

Digitized by Google

lingering traces of this logical confusion, which besets almost every scheme of Christian Evidences, may not even yet be found in our author's creed, we will not here pause to decide. For some time it continued to entangle him. The habit of distrusting the *moral* judgment, and of placing strong confidence in the results of inductive science and historical criticism, led him to test the infallibility of Scripture, in the first instance, by its verdict on matters clearly within the range of the common understanding, — of Geography, Physiology, Natural History, Language, &c. For one prepossessed with the demand for an unerring record, — one whose early faith had taken into its very essence the myths of Genesis, no less than the story of Gethsemane, — one who, under guidance of the systematizing Paul, had worked his way back with one idea through all providential history from the Ascension to the Creation, and who expected, on retracing his steps, to find it all a drama, with the opening in Eden, the development among the prophets, and the catastrophe on Calvary; it is easy to foresee the result. Bibliolatry was replaced by Iconoclasm: and the Scriptures lost by degrees, not simply their supernatural authority, but their natural credit. The course of discovery was so little different from the usual one, that it is needless to dwell upon it in detail. Beginning with the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, so evidently faulty and irreconcilable in their contents, and inconclusive in result, Mr. Newman soon found that no such thing as a harmony of the Gospels could be made, and that they must be

Digitized by Google

severally treated (the first three constituting practically only one) as human and fallible records. The same criticism, when applied to the Old Testament, invalidated the legends of the Fall and the Deluge, and brought to light the composite structure of the Pentateuch, out of various preëxisting materials. The direct sanction of Jehovah to the iniquities of early Israelitish history is found to be too distinctly claimed to be explained away by any theory of development or accommodation. The demonology of the first three Gospels seems so completely an integral and even a principal part of their evidence for the Messiahship, that the misconceptions involved in it affect, in our author's estimation, their whole case, and destroy all confidence in their narrations. One reliance after another thus giving way, he rests for a while on a consolatory suggestion of Dr. Arnold's, — that the Gospel of John stands alone and unassailable among the materials of primitive Christian history. The sober-minded Paul, too, had borne his witness to the risen Christ; and Peter had referred to the Transfiguration. Not even this narrow footing retains its firmness long. Without pronouncing against the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, Mr. Newman is so much impressed with the coloring evidently thrown over all its contents by the author's own mind, as well as by the negative evidence against the public and stupendous miracles which, half a century after their alleged occurrence, he exclusively reports, that he renounces the book as unhistorical. There remains, however, the dear and venerated Paul. Alas! he descants upon the gift of

Digitized by Google

tongues! and our author, having fallen in the way of the Irvingite pretensions to this endowment, had learned at once to despise it, and to believe it identical in London with the apostolic phenomena at Corinth. This, with the good apostle's easy faith in trance or vision, betrays such eccentric notions of the logic of evidence, that no high estimate can be made of his testimony to the resurrection. He held himself indeed somewhat proudly independent of all natural sources of information respecting Christ, and declared his Gospel to be a separate and personal revelation. Unless we know something of the *process* which Paul interpreted into divine communication, and could assure ourselves that it was not wholly subjective, we should not be justified in accepting objective history on his word. So the Apostle of the Gentiles, revered for his spiritual greatness, is allowed, as a witness, to pass dishonored away. One only hope yet remained. The main and central personage might be divine, though inaccessible through the unskilful reports of companions and followers. There was a message worthy of God to send, and, if the intended object of faith at all, needful for man thus to receive, — the tidings of an immortal life: perhaps, after all, Jesus was invested with the Messiahship to be the bearer of this truth. Was he then the Messiah? — For an answer to this question we need not depend entirely on the evangelical records. We know in outline both the history of the Founder of Christianity, and the course run by his Religion. We know also whence the picture is drawn of the Ideal Personage fore-announced

Digitized by Google

as the Messiah. By comparing the preconception with the facts, we can pronounce whether a realization has taken place. Mr. Newman's examination dissipates the Messianic prophecies altogether; and he concludes that the last claim on behalf of Jesus vanishes with them. Finally, he digresses into a collateral discussion of the claims of Christianity on the gratitude of mankind for its beneficent influence on civilization: and he gives it as his judgment, that neither the woman nor the slave has any clear reason for looking on the Gospel as an emancipating agency: and that we owe the Reformation less to the disinterred Scriptures and the energies of Luther, than to the Heathen moralists and the revival of letters. Thus, with relentless perseverance, does our author wage war with every objective support of Religion, and not rest till, by sweeping off every medium, he has left a clear space between the individual soul and God. That, with one so rich in devout and lofty sentiment, this may all take place, and cause "no convulsion of mind, no emptiness of soul, no inward practical change," we fully believe; we think the time is come when the whole series of external questions noticed by Mr. Newman should be discussed without expressions of holy horror, as if the ultimate essence of religion were profanely touched: and ere we proceed to declare our strong dissent from the most important of the author's negative conclusions, we desire to accept, upon his own terms, the claim of spiritual fellowship preferred in these admirable sentences: —

"I know that many Evangelicals will reply, that I never

Digitized by Google

can have had 'the true' faith; else I could never have lost it: and as for my not being conscious of spiritual change, they will accept this as confirming their assertion. Undoubtedly I cannot prove that I ever felt as they now feel. Perhaps they love their present opinions *more than* truth, and are careless to examine and verify them: with that I claim no fellowship. But there are Christians of another stamp, who love their creed *only* because they believe it to be true, but love truth, as such, and truthfulness, more than any creed: with these I claim fellowship. Their love to God and man, their allegiance to righteousness and true holiness, will not be in suspense, and liable to be overturned by new discoveries in geology and in ancient inscriptions, or by improved criticisms of texts and of history; nor have they any imaginable interest in thwarting the advance of scholarship. It is strange indeed to undervalue *that* Faith, which alone is purely moral and spiritual, alone rests on a basis that cannot be shaken, alone lifts the possessor above the conflicts of erudition, and makes it impossible for him to fear the increase of knowledge." — p. 201.

When we say that with by far the greater part of Mr. Newman's criticism on the Old Testament we are disposed to agree, and that we would by no means ask equal and indiscriminate admission for all the contents of the New, it will be plain that we are no Bibliolaters. But in simple obedience to the feeling of literary justice, we must profess our opinion, that the primitive Christian records do not receive fair treatment at his hands. The flaws which he enumerates, even if all admitted to be there, would not invalidate the large masses of history which he treats as worthless on their account: nor is it well to throw away wholesale such fruits of a

Digitized by Google

tree of life, — reproductive seed and all, — in offence at the spots upon the skin. Whether, when the necessary deductions have been made, what remains be worth preserving, — whether it be essence or only accident, — must certainly depend on our preconception of what we have a right to expect from the document. If we must find evidence enough to prove the book an oracle, and to establish all the sentiments, precepts, and beliefs therein attributed even to its chief personage in the place of obligatory rules or incontrovertible truths, we freely own that the enterprise is hopeless. But that Revelation can be made only in the shape of orders imposed upon the will, or information communicated to the understanding, is a postulate which we cannot allow. God may speak to us, — in preternatural as in natural providence, — through our moral perceptions and affections, — according to the manner of Art, by creation of spiritual Beauty, rather than after the type of Science, by logical delivery of truth. In this case, all that can be required of the vehicle is, that it be an adequate and preservative frame-work for the Divine image presented before the human soul. In the Gospels, taken with relation to the Pauline writings, this requisition appears to us fully met. Whatever uncertainty there may be, in this or that detail, as to what Christ *did*, there is surely no reasonable doubt as to what he *was*: and if this be left, then, so far from all being lost, the essential power of the Christian religion is permanently safe. To our author's strictures on this conception of Christianity we shall hereafter advert: at present we post-

Digitized by Google

pone the dogmatic to the Biblical question, whether in the Evangelists' writings we possess an authentic and divine picture of character. The tendency of Mr. Newman's mind to external observation is so strong, that he rarely resorts to the higher moral criticism which affects this point. While he repeatedly intimates his opinion that the reverential estimate of the character of Christ is a baseless exaggeration, we remember only two direct apologies for this opinion. The first is stated in the following passage, where, after justly vindicating the position, that miracles cannot turn aside the common laws of morality, he adds,—

"But if only a *small* immorality is concerned, shall we then say that a miracle may justify it? Could it authorize me to plait a whip of small cords, and flog a preferment-hunter out of the pulpit? or would it justify me in publicly calling the Queen and her Ministers 'a brood of vipers, who cannot escape the damnation of hell'? Such questions go very deep into the heart of the Christian claims." — p. 151.

The cleansing of the Temple "a small immorality"! an offence against politeness! Yes: the prophetic spirit is sometimes oblivious of the rules of the drawing-room: and inspired Conscience, like the inspiring God, seeing a hypocrite, will take the liberty to say so, and to act accordingly. Are the superficial amenities, the soothing fictions, the smotherings of the burning heart, needful for the common usages of civilization and the comfortable intercourse of equals, really paramount in this world, and never to give way? and when a soul of power, unable to refrain, rubs off, though it be with rasping words, all

Digitized by Google

tree of life, — reproductive seed and all, — in offen
at the spots upon the skin. Whether, when the n
essary deductions have been made, what remains b
worth preserving, — whether it be essence or onl
accident, — must certainly depend on our precon
ception of what we have a right to expect from th
document. If we must find evidence enough t
prove the book an oracle, and to establish all the
sentiments, precepts, and beliefs therein attributed
even to its chief personage in the place of obligatory
rules or incontrovertible truths, we freely own tha
the enterprise is hopeless. But that Revelation can
be made only in the shape of orders imposed upon
the will, or information communicated to the under
standing, is a postulate which we cannot allow
God may speak to us, — in preternatural as in nat
ural providence, — through our moral perception
and affections, — according to the manner of *Art*, by
creation of spiritual Beauty, rather than after the
type of Science, by logical delivery of truth. *In thi*
case, all that can be required of the vehicle *is*, tha
it be an adequate and preservative frame-work fo
the Divine image presented before the human *soul*
In the Gospels, taken with relation to the *Pauline*
writings, this requisition appears to us fully *met*.
Whatever uncertainty there may be, in this or that
detail, as to [illegible] there is surely no rea-
[illegible] if this be *left*,
[illegible] ential power
this
d-

Digitized by Google

pone the dogmatic to the Biblical question, whether
n the Evangelists' writings we possess an authentic
and divine picture of character. The tendency of
Mr. Newman's mind to external observation is so
strong, that he rarely resorts to the higher moral crit-
icism which affects this point. While he repeatedly
intimates his opinion that the reverential estimate of
the character of Christ is a baseless exaggeration,
we remember only two direct apologies for this opin-
ion. The first is stated in the following passage,
where, after justly vindicating the position, that mir-
acles cannot turn aside the common laws of moral-
ity, he adds, —

"But if only a *small* immorality is concerned, shall we
then say that a miracle may justify it? Could it author-
ize me to plait a whip of small cords, and flog a preferment-
hunter out of the pulpit? or would it justify me in publicly
calling the Queen and her Ministers "a brood of vipers, who
cannot escape the damnation of hell"? Such questions go
very deep into the heart of the Christian claims." — p. 161.

The cleansing of the Temple "a small immorality"! an offence against politeness! Nay, this pro-
phetic spirit is sometimes oblivious of the rules of
the drawing-room: and inspired Constance, like the
inspiring God, seeing a hypocrite, will utter the lib-
erty to say so, and to act accordingly. Are the
perficial amenities, the soothing fictions, the
ering's of the
usage es of
of equals

the varnish from rottenness and lies, is he to be tried in our courts of compliment for a misdemeanor? Is there never a duty higher than that of either pitying or converting guilty men, — the duty of publicly exposing them? of awakening the popular conscience, and sweeping away the conventional timidities, for a severe return to truth and reality? No rule of morals can be recognized as just, which prohibits conformity of human speech to fact, and insists on terms of civility being kept with all manner of iniquity. Offensive as may be the *expression* "brood of vipers," it is hardly so offensive as the *thing;* and when corrupt and venomous times have not only generated it, but brought it to coil around the altar, and hinder the approach of hearts too pure to worship it, can any law of God forbid to crush it with the heel of scorn? There are crises in human affairs, when the sympathies of noble minds, like parties in a convulsed and struggling nation, cannot avoid vehement contrast and disruption; when compassion for a deluded people involves open denunciation of the deceivers who ought to be the guides; and when scalding invective — the *ultima ratio* of speech — becomes as much a necessity of justice and as little a violation of any worthy love, as an appeal to the sword by the redeemers of an injured Commonwealth. The presumed analogy between Mr. Newman's infliction of personal castigation on a clergyman in the pulpit and Christ's act in driving the sheep and oxen from the Temple courts is not fortunate. Indeed, we must say, in reference to this whole stricture, that Criticism, in its lashing moods,

Digitized by Google

has seldom, in our opinion, plaited a whip of *smaller* cords.

The other moral charge against the Author of Christianity is rather implied than directly stated, and is necessarily mixed up with other considerations not properly *moral.* He gave himself out as the Messiah; and he was evidently *not* Messiah: he must have been conscious of his inability to support the character; yet to the last he refused to quit the pretension. Now we admit, in a certain sense, every one of these propositions: yet maintain that they establish no point whatsoever against the perfect truth and sanctity of Christ. This statement will cease to appear paradoxical, when due allowance is made for the vague and ambiguous meaning of the word "*Messiah.*" It is needless to say, that this term denotes no real object *in rerum naturâ*, but a wholly ideal personage, the arbitrary product of Jewish imagination. As in all such cases of mental creation, the attributes assigned to him, being free from all restraint of fact, were exceedingly numerous and indeterminate, — involving features personal, political, and religious: nor was the type so rigorously fixed as not to yield, with adequate pliancy, to the plastic pressure of each believer's individual temperament and thought. The Messianic characteristics needed to satisfy the compilers of the first three Gospels were different from those demanded by the writer of the fourth; and yet another set were requisite for Paul. How are we to apply a conception so shifting as a criterion of the reality of a divine mission, and of the sincerity of one professing

Digitized by Google

to be charged with it? It would be easy, in every imaginable case, to find out attributes in the national preconception, which would be missing in the individual realization; the concrete combination of all being simply impossible. True it is, that, conversely, the cases were proportionably frequent in which *some* features were sufficiently present to allow of plausible pretensions to the character. But this only proves how unfit is an ideal image like this to serve as a test of spiritual claims. What are the decisive marks which are indispensable to the assertor of Messiahship? Mr. Newman seeks them in the Hebrew prophecies which furnished the first lineaments of the conception: and protests that to these representations there is little in Jesus which truly corresponds. But does he forget that, in trying the pretensions of Isaiah and the Hebrew bards, he had already condemned these very passages as empty of all prediction, and justifying no such expectation as was afterwards based upon them? He thus withdraws the national ideal from the Old Testament; and then puts it in again for the refutation of the Christian claims: and makes it a charge against Jesus, that he *did not realize certain non-existent prophecies.* The discrepancy between the historical picture in the New Testament and the pseudo-prophetic in the Old, might reasonably be urged by a Jew; but to Mr. Newman it should rather afford an evidence that the Evangelical narrative is a sketch from the life, and not a mythical fancy-piece imitated from David and Isaiah. No doubt Jesus, by the very act of appealing to the Hebrew Scriptures, as-

Digitized by Google

sumes their Messianic import, and so betrays his participation in the common misconstruction of their meaning. But this implies no more than such fallibility in matters of intellectual and literary estimate, as every theory must allow which leaves to the inspired prophet any human faculties at all, or any means of contact with the mind of his age and nation. Inspiration in matters of textual criticism and exegesis can be demanded only by a theology beneath contempt; and least of all by our author, who so widely separates the functions of the intellect and the soul, and protests against all qualifying of spiritual perceptions by learned judgments. No *moral* charge is established, until it is shown, that, in applying the old prophecies to himself, Jesus was *conscious* that they did not fit. This, however, is not shown and cannot be shown. The absence in him of some of the prophetic lineaments was so compensated by the intensity of others, that no suspicion can be thrown upon the purity and sincerity of his claim; especially as it was in the accidents of external power that he was wanting, and in the essence of spiritual light that he abounded. He claimed to be "Messiah," it is said; and "Messiah he was *not*." True; and if he was *less* than this, we can reverence him no longer. But if he was *more*, only could find no other language than the Messianic in which to interpret to himself and others the feeling of his Divine call, then was the national formula the mere vehicle furnished by history for an essential fact, the modest costume disguising a divine reality: and the only error in the account which Christ gives of him-

Digitized by Google

self lies in its affirming far less than the truth. In the theocratic faith which occupied Palestine, two distinct elements coexisted, — the political and the religious: the former promising external glories according to the type, but transcending the limits, of the united monarchy; the latter intent upon the realization of a spiritual Ideal, including the restoration of pure worship and the establishment of men in a saintly fraternity in immediate communion with Heaven. As the first of these elements supplied natural materials to the ambition and vanity of pretenders, so did the second offer a receptacle to which the holiest mind and the highest inspiration would not shrink from resorting. So was it, as we believe, with Christ. The political functions of Messiah he never positively denied, or absolutely cleared out from his mere speculative representations of the future. But an infallible moral perception, and affections spiritually preoccupied, detained him from every tendency to realize them; made him regard their practical occurrence to his mind as a diabolical Temptation; and drove him into mountain solitudes, when eager multitudes would set him up for king. Whether, according to the account in the first three Gospels, he dealt with the political part of the Messianic scheme, when it obtruded itself, by *putting it off* into the future; or whether, according to John, he got rid of it by *melting it* absolutely and immediately away in the spiritual; either method is so true to the instinct of a mind too clear and holy to touch what it is not sceptical enough to disbelieve, that we wonder at the preference shown for the vul-

Digitized by Google

gar imputation, — "Depend upon it, Jesus would have raised an army if he could; and only talked about religion, because there was nothing else that he could do."

The fact to which we have adverted, — the investiture of a spiritual mission with a Messianic form, — explains a phenomenon in John's Gospel to which Mr. Newman applies (p. 146) some severe criticisms. That Gospel betrays great vacillation in its estimate of the logical value of miracles: representing Christ sometimes as reproving the demand for a miracle, and blessing those whose faith can dispense with such support; sometimes as appealing to miracle as a just basis for belief. The fact of this mixed appeal is indisputable: and to us it seems in every way suitable to the mixed character sustained by Jesus, as *human* or universal prophet, and as *national Messiah*. The miracles to which he appeals were regarded as the proper *signs* of theocratic *power;* the faith without miracle was the just demand he made on the spiritual sympathies of good hearts. They were severally insisted on in behalf of different positions: the one to prove his Jewish Messiahship; the other, his insight into Divine things hidden from the possible apprehension of no pure soul. In the latter, we are concerned with the permanent life of Christianity; in the former, with its mere door of entrance upon the theatre of human affairs.

The absence of this distinction appears to us a frequent cause of unconscious unfairness in Mr. Newman's strictures. The rules of estimate which

Digitized by Google

you would apply to a philosophical system are very different from those by which you appreciate an historical development: — in the one case, they are *absolute*, furnished by your conceptions of what is abstractedly true in itself; in the other, they are *relative*, and have regard to actual human conditions, admitting or excluding what was better or worse. In a philosophical theory, every blemish and omission is justly held to detract from its merits: but in an historical development, such imperfections may be due, not to the new, but to the old, — to the irremovable data of feeling and belief which the young agency finds in occupation of the field given for its work. This difference is not annihilated, when we have to do with supernatural instead of natural affairs. Revelation may assume the form either of a divine philosophy, professing to furnish unconditioned truth; or of a divine influence cast into the midst of the world's development, and weaving a pattern of more than human art and beauty into the texture of history. It is in the former aspect that our author contemplates the religion of Christendom; and he is thus led to charge upon it many things that cannot justly be laid to its account. Christianity, as presented in the Scriptures, is a composite fabric; — the woof of Christ's personal spirit thrown across the warp of an antecedent Judaism: and it is not fairly answerable for flaws and stains in that which it found already stretched upon the loom. Thus, when Mr. Newman imputes to the New Testament the doctrine, that God punishes men "for holding an erroneous creed" (p. 168),

Digitized by Google

he states what is partially true, yet leaves on the whole an impression quite false. Such a sentiment is entirely foreign to the religion of Christ, as distinguished from the previous Hebrew theology: and every thing which resembles it is an uncancelled remnant of the earlier system. From the very nature of the case, every theocratic scheme is necessarily exclusive. The Gospel, born within the limits of such doctrines, could not, in taking all their grandeur, escape at once the whole of their severity. But its entire tendency was to destroy the previous narrowness; and to throw open, as well as purify, the terms of communion with God. For exclusion by *race* and other arbitrary external disqualifications, it substituted exclusion by *spiritual condition alone.* It may be said, that the required spiritual condition involved a creed. Even this, however, though undeniably true, is not a characteristic description of the fact. It was reverence for a Person, not reception of Propositions, which constituted the Apostolic test; an allegiance of soul to the heavenly Christ, not an affirmation by the intellect of metaphysic dogmas. And may it not be reasonably doubted whether, under the then condition of the world, any other test could have effected a truer moral partition of that portion of mankind with which the Apostles came in contact? If our modern doctrine — of God's indifference to men's creed — had been propagated in an age when creed was no affair of conscientious private judgment, but was mixed up inseparably with moral and social causes, and if the Apostle of the Gentiles had preached at Ephesus and Corinth

Digitized by Google

out of the "Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions," how would the Divine crusade have prospered against the zealotry of Jerusalem and the idolatrous corruptions of the Roman Empire? Paul, avowedly expecting an end of the world, proclaimed a divine classification of mankind in regard to that great catastrophe, — a classification involving probably no such incorrect moral estimate after all. If, by an absurd Bibliolatry, men have imported a division, similar in sound but not in sense, into a stage of the world and conditions of human character never contemplated by him, with what justice are his writings made answerable for the folly and narrow-heartedness of his readers? The same refusal to take any account of historical conditions influences our author's judgment as to the doctrine of demoniacal possession. That this superstition embodied in the Scriptures has been the cause of many evils, is incontrovertible. But causes anterior to Christianity created the superstition: a Bibliolatry, of which Christianity is independent, prolonged it. It is easy to expatiate upon the mischiefs of this or any other error left uneradicated by the new religion; but, unless we take into comparison the state in which the case had been *before*, or would have been *without* Christianity, we shut out the conditions of all rational judgment. For ourselves we are convinced that the Dualistic belief expressed in the doctrine of *possession* is truer and more favorable to moral progress than any theory of unreduced evil accessible under the same conditions of the human intellect. To ask for the religious fruits of physical

Digitized by Google

science, before that science exists, appears to us in the highest degree unreasonable.

The immense extent of ground traversed by our author's Biblical criticism renders it impossible for a Reviewer to follow him in detail. We would gladly have said something in defence of the Pauline logic, and the peculiar sources of the Pauline Gospel, as well as in correction of Mr. Newman's verdict respecting the fourth Gospel, — a verdict which appears to us far too positive, and to some extent resting on fanciful grounds. But these topics cannot be fairly treated without a minuteness of discussion of which our readers would justly complain: and we confess our inability, from consciousness of the real difficulties attending them, to deal with them in any very confident and dogmatic tone. We are not sure, however, that the Apostolic "logic" which our author so much slights was not, on some points, sounder than our own; and we cannot share his unqualified distrust of all subjective impressions as media of revelation. We are the less able to discuss these questions with him, because we cannot make a consistent whole of his own logic of evidence in relation to them. He distinctly lays it down (p. 152), that "it is *in the spirit* alone that we meet God, *not* in the communications of sense"; yet objects to Paul's ἀποκάλυψις, that we know not whether "he saw or heard a sound" (p. 148), and that "he learned his Gospel by *an internal revelation*" (p. 181). He admits that it "was to the *inward senses* that the first preachers of Christianity appealed, as the supreme arbiters in the whole religious question" (p. 156);

Digitized by Google

and that "all evidence for Christianity must be *moral* evidence" (p. 217): yet his complaint is always of the want of *external* guaranty. If all the evidence must be moral and spiritual, then all matters not included in this category leave the evidence untouched: and the religion remains unaffected by the errors in history, geography, construction of miracle, and logic, which our author discerns in its first records. In short, the *proof* is allowed to be exclusively moral and spiritual: yet the *disproof* alleged is historical, scientific, and metaphysical.

In his criticism of Doctrine, Mr. Newman comments on the theory of Christianity, to which we have already referred with approval, viz. that the religion is embodied in the Life and Spirit of Christ, who is a perfect man and the moral image of God. He assigns "many decisive reasons" why it was impossible "that such a train of thought could recommend itself to him for a moment." The first of these reasons is, that Religion would still remain a problem of literature; for, beautiful as the picture of Jesus may be, how but by a refined and elaborate criticism can we tell whether the portrait may not be imaginary instead of real? We reply, Religion may fitly remain thus far a problem of literature; nor is it apparent how we are ever, except through the medium of preservative records, to be placed in mental contact with the objects of just reverence that have visited our world; yet are these objects the grand agencies for the devout education of individuals and nations. So long, indeed, as it is asserted that faith in Christ is the *condition of salvation* and

Digitized by Google

the *essential to the Divine favor*, it is grossly inconsistent to make it at the same time contingent on a trembling balance of critical evidence: and against the exclusive scheme of orthodox churches, this objection presses with irresistible weight; for there the propositions to be accepted are of infinite intricacy, and the results of mistake, a hopeless and eternal ruin. But in the theory now before us, the burden of consequences is reduced to the ordinary freight of truth and error; and the critical problem — whether such a being as Jesus Christ really lived, and was such as the Gospels and Paul represent — is so simple, that no serious uncertainty can be pretended in respect to it. Mr. Newman appears to us to strain till it breaks the principle that religion must ask for nothing beyond the individual spirit of the ignorant human being. To insist that it shall owe nothing to the Past, and be the same as if there were no history; to demand that each shall find it for himself *de novo*, as if he were the first man and the only man; to rely, for its truth or its progress, on its perpetual personal reproduction in isolated minds, — is to require terms which the nature of man forbids and the Providence of God will disappoint. Transmitted influence from soul to soul, whether among contemporaries, or down the course of time, is not only as *natural*, but as *spiritual*, as the direct relation of each worshipper of God. Indeed, traditional faith — communicated reverence — is that which distinguishes the nobler religion of civilized and associated nations from the egotism of Fetish worship: and it cannot be that a tendency which only a few lonely minds

Digitized by Google

are capable or desirous of escaping, is without any proper function in the world. Nor is it right to judge these Unitarians who are the objects of Mr. Newman's strictures as if their doctrine were "new," as if they went back on a general excursion through history, and fetched up thence, by their private selection, a person fit to be the moral image of God. They merely attempt to state the essential spirit of a ready-made fact. They observe a past and present Christendom, actually worshipping a God who is the glorified resemblance of Christ. They have not to establish the habit, and make good the whole series of antecedents from which it has arisen: but, finding it in possession of the field, to make a just estimate of its intrinsic truth and excellence. Looking at it thus, they simply say, "This is good, this is the truest and divinest of which we can think; the moral instinct of Christendom is right." It will be time enough to present complaints on behalf of the poor and uneducated, when the majesty and sanctity of Christ's mind have practically become as liable to doubt, as the reality of some of the miracles, and the authorship of some of the books. Meanwhile, we believe the intuitive feeling to be perfectly well founded, that superhuman goodness *cannot* be feigned by any act of free imagination; and to be fully justified by that "vast moral chasm between the Gospel and the very earliest Christian writers," which left upon Mr. Newman himself a "sense of the unapproachable greatness of the New Testament." And after all, come what may of the possibility of critical verification, the Divine Image fur-

Digitized by Google

nished by the life of Christ is now secured to the soul of Christendom, — presides in secret over its moral estimates, directs its aspirations, and inspires its worship. In proportion as this *educative* function of historical reverence is protracted and complete, does it become of less moment to verify its sources in detail. The eye, once couched and trained to the usages of vision, does not relapse into the dark, when the traces are lost or the knowledge is wanting of the process and instrument of recovery. And when called upon to quit its estimate of the holiness of Christ, by critics who say, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner"; Christendom, like the disciple blind from his birth, may be content to reply, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

To the form of Christianity which we are considering, Mr. Newman further objects that the asserted perfectness in the character of Christ is wholly imaginary; and, if he were physically human, intrinsically incredible. As the first of these allegations is simply an expression of the author's personal distaste, and is not otherwise supported than by the statement, that, for his part, he prefers Fletcher of Madeley (himself, we presume, a disciple) to Jesus of Nazareth, it admits of no reply beyond an expression of surprise at an estimate so singular. Even the vagaries of Rousseau led him to no such eccentricity of scepticism; and amid doubt of every authoritative claim, he closed the Gospel with the acknowledgment that Jesus "lived and died like a

Digitized by Google

God." Certainly, if Dr. Fletcher of Madeley does really appear to our author a *perfect man*, he must and will (whether the fact be recognized or not) so far assume in his mind the function of Christ, as to furnish the richest moral elements to his conception of God. But for ourselves we must confess a difficulty — unfelt perhaps by Mr. Newman, but common to all dependent minds — in standing quite alone in admiration, and trusting our absolutely solitary perceptions, as we should those in which thousands of brethren joined with us, and declared the light of heavenly beauty to lie upon the very spot which it paints for us. The established power of a soul over multitudes of others, — its historic greatness, — its productiveness, through season after season of this world, in the fruits of sanctity, *must* inevitably enter as an element into our veneration: and scarcely do we dare, by free homage of the heart, to own the trace of God in another's life, till we find our comrades in sympathy with us. Till then, we feel as though we might be magnifying our idiosyncrasies, and throwing over the universe the speck or tint of our own eye. Therefore it is that no private person, even though he more intensely stirs the distinctive affections of our narrow individuality, can ever come into just comparison with Christ, or become the object of that broad and trustful reverence which rather draws the soul out of itself, than drives it more closely inward. We know there must be a limit to this dependence; and we honor from our hearts those who, from clearness of eye and courage of soul, can be *first* disciples of any

Digitized by Google

prophet of God. But even they do not contemplate remaining alone; they live on the concurrence of the future, though not of the present and the past, and attest the ideal need of sympathy to faith. Between the boldness of him who interprets the future exclusively by himself, and the dependent temper of those who correct and confirm themselves by reference to the past, we will not attempt to adjust the balance. But Fletcher of Madeley does not tempt us to sever ourselves from the common consciousness of Christendom. Mr. Newman, in treating of this topic, advances a logical criticism to which we can by no means subscribe: —

"It is not fair to ask (as some whom I exceedingly respect do ask), that those who do not admit Jesus to be faultless and the very image of God, will specify and establish his faults. This is to demand that we will *presume* him to be perfect, until we find him to be imperfect. Such a presumption is natural with those who accept him as an angelic being; absurd in one who regards him as a genuine man, with no preternatural origin and power. If by sensible and physical proof the orthodox can show that he is God incarnate, it will be reasonable to assume that he is a perfect specimen of moral excellence, and after this it will be difficult to criticize. But when sensible proof of his immaculate conception and of his Godhead is allowed not to exist, and maintained to be abstractedly impossible, I have no words to express my wonder at that logic which starts by acknowledging and establishing his simple manhood, proceeds to *presume* his absolute moral perfection, *throws on others the task of disproving the presumption*, and regards their silence as a verification that he is God manifest in the flesh." — p. 211.

Digitized by Google

In spite of these startling expressions of wonder, we must persist in presuming Jesus to be perfect till shown to be imperfect. We derive our estimate of him wholly from the picture presented in the Gospels, — purified certainly by some critical clearances, defensible by canons of internal evidence, — and so long as this picture presents no moral imperfections, we must decline supplying them out of the resources of fancy. In *presuming* Christ to be perfect, we simply refuse to suppose a drawback on what we see from what we do not see, and insist on forming our judgment from the known, without arbitrary modification from the unknown. No doubt Jesus, as a being open to temptation, was intrinsically capable of sin: but this, as a set-off against the positive evidence of holiness, no more proves *actual* imperfection, than the mere capacity for goodness in the wicked proves their actual perfection. How can character ever be estimated but by the phenomena through which it expresses itself in the life? and how can these be set aside by abstract considerations respecting the rank and parentage of the moral agent? According to our author, we are to distrust our own moral perceptions, and believe apparent beauty to be real deformity, until a *physical* proof of Godhead is superadded: and we are, in this instance, to contradict his own rule, that spiritual discernment requires no voucher from external miracle. We are at a loss to conceive in what way a superhuman physical nature could tend in the least degree to render moral perfection more credible. The classifications of Natural History are not to be obtruded upon Religion,

Digitized by Google

and gradations of excellence to be merged in distinctions of Species. Christ had the *liability* to sin, not because he was *human*, but because he was *free;* and whatever presumption of imperfection arises hence, would have arisen no less, had he been an angel of the highest rank. All souls are of one species: or rather are lifted above the level where diversity of species prevails, so as to range, not with Nature, but with God. The same Laws, the same Love, the same Will, the same Worship, pervade them all, and make them of one clan; nor is there any portion of the series whence a perfect sanctity might not be evolved with equal possibility and with similar result. It is strange that Mr. Newman should stipulate for the immaculate conception, as a condition of believing any exalted character in Christ; and should forget that the Gospel which makes him diviner than all the rest (that of John), knows nothing of the miraculous birth, and teaches, apart from all physical conditions, the very doctrine now the object of remark. That the Apostle Paul never dwelt on the earthly life of Christ; that no relics, no *holy coats*, and other results of tender and human affection for an historical personage, appeared in the first age, proves no more than that the expectation of the near Advent withdrew the mind of the early Church from the Past to the Future, and kindled a faith too dazzling for quiet retrospection. The personal object, however, though placed in the imaginary scene before, instead of among the realities behind, was still the same. And as soon as the anticipation of his reappearance faded away,

Digitized by Google

the eye of the Church, unable to quit the image, changed its direction, and sought him where alone he was to be found, in the fields of Palestine and the courts of Jerusalem; and thenceforth enthusiastic hope was replaced by historic reverence. Indeed, the stories of the Birth and Infancy with which two of the Gospels open, show that the retrospective attitude of faith had already been assumed. It is vain to quote Paul against this view, and in favor of an estimate which reduces the earthly life of Jesus to "commonplace." If to him the Christ above was the "Ideal of glorified human nature," — heavenly before his birth, heavenly after his death, — how, in the intermediate ministry on earth, could Paul, like Mr. Newman, suppose him quite common and undivine? If the history of that ministry failed to support the impression of the Pauline ideal, how could the Apostle's theory escape the most formidable difficulties? It was the same Jesus that had presented himself in both spheres: and the unity of the character must be preserved by those whose veneration is directed towards him in either. Paul's imagination *descended* from Christ in heaven to Christ on earth; ours *ascends* from Christ on earth to Christ in heaven; and ends with enthroning him where Paul first knew him. Whichever path of transition be taken, the moral conception of the Person must be the same; having on him the traces of that ideal perfectness in the faith of which both theories terminate. The acceptance of Christ, therefore, as the moral image of God, appears to us to be strictly involved in the Pauline Gospel, and to be quite as compatible with a human as with an angelic rank.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Newman objects in conclusion against this version of Christianity, that it attempts to combine incompatible conditions, — to save free Criticism without sacrificing Authority: and that there is "something intensely absurd in accepting Jesus as the Messiah, and refusing to acknowledge him as the *authoritative teacher*, to whose wisdom we must pay perpetual, unlimited, unhesitating homage" (p. 212). Now we fully concur with our author in rejecting all notion of an absolute oracle, to whose *dicta* we are submissively to bow: nor do we know of *any* general proposition which we should think it right to accept *merely* on the word of Jesus. We further allow, that this withdrawal from him of the oracular function probably *is* at variance with the Jewish conception of Messiah's office. But we deny that it is at variance with the Christian conception of a moral type of Divine Perfectness. The most faultless administration of life, the most saintly communion with God, the divinest symmetry of soul, may surely coexist with limited knowledge: and sinlessness of Conscience does not require Omniscience in the Understanding. To be no great scholar in Chaldee, and ill-read in the Court-annals of the Seleucidæ, and consequently make mistakes about the book of Daniel, and not see what is invisible in the destinies of the Roman empire, — how does this hinder the exercise of pure affection and the life of holy faithfulness? Goodness is qualitative; knowledge is quantitative: and throughout every variety in the quantity, immaculateness is possible in the quality. In the power natural to the higher soul

Digitized by Google

over the lower, in the silent appeal which the beauty of its holiness makes to the struggling and feeble will, there is indeed an exercise of *authority*, and of the only kind that is ultimately possible: but it involves no intellectual dictation, and is indeed consistent with none: it gives not a true proposition to our assent, but a divine object to our perception: and while the moral and spiritual intuition are reverently engaged upon the person, leaves the logical understanding free play among all ideas. Mr. Newman is fond of drawing the distinction between the spiritual and the intellectual in the case of ordinary men. No one demonstrates more convincingly the independence of religious insight on all conclusions of the scientific judgment and states of objective knowledge; protests more strongly against every demand of *right belief* in matters external as a test of nearness to God; or better shows the open communion of the Father of Lights with his children in proportion to their purity of heart, irrespective of the culture and correctness of the mind. Why is this to be true of the disciples, and false of the Master? With what consistency is the Spirit of God made indifferent to intellectual conditions in the one case, yet tested by infallibility in the other? Our author has only to extend to the Founder the conception of inspiration on which he insists in the Church; and he obtains the completest answer to his own demand for an oracular Christ.

The reaction of our author's mind against his early belief does not affect merely his views of the *sources* of Christianity. He criticizes also its *history*;

Digitized by Google

and denies its beneficent agency, even in directions wherein it has hitherto been regarded as scarcely open to challenge. It has done nothing, he thinks, to improve the condition of the woman or the slave: its spread, no less than that of Mohammedanism, has been the work of the sword: and it has rather restricted, than produced, the benefits of the Reformation. Nothing in this volume has so much amazed us as the disproportion between the magnitude of these propositions and the slenderness of the grounds on which they are made to rest. First, as to the condition of women; he urges, that "the real elevators of the female sex are the poets of Germanic culture, who have vindicated the spirituality of love and its attraction to character" (p. 165); that the Apostle Paul, far from reaching any such sentiment, discourages marriage, except as a means of escaping the temptations of passion; and that in the South of Europe, where Germanic feeling has taken no root, the relative position of the sexes is not improved. In relation to this question, as to many others, we protest against the identification with Christianity itself of the personal views of this or that Apostle: we are not to seek in the crude germ of the religion for that which belongs to its full and developed fruit. It is enough (and this surely is incontrovertible) that Paul's doctrine on this subject was a vast *improvement* on the Gentile morality which it replaced; that the rules which he imposed on the administrators and members of Christian communities were the only ones which could give scope for the spontaneous growth of the best sentiments; and that his

Digitized by Google

treatment of the case, having exclusive reference to the end of the world supposed to be imminent, was never intended to serve for all time, and owed to its provisional purpose whatever is questionable in it. And after all, unjust as it is to measure the ultimate tendency of an historical influence by its incipient phenomena, there does appear to us a manifest trace, in the first age itself, of an ennobling influence from the recognized spiritual equality of the sexes. The women of Galilee and the sisters of Bethany, the helpers of Paul in Macedonia and Corinth, the martyred deaconesses of Lyons and Carthage, were surely lifted by their faith into a consciousness of the claims of the soul, to which nothing in Pagan antiquity can present a moral parallel. We have no desire to derogate from the just merits of German sentiment; or to establish any competition of pretension between its influence and that of Christianity. But is it too much to say that, for the production of their beneficent results, the two agencies had to concur; and that if, on the one hand, the religion was comparatively barren till it struck upon the German soul, so, on the other, that soul had but the latent capacity for nobler development till quickened by reception of the religion? We certainly believe that the chief function of the first eight centuries of the Church was to hand over the religion to its proper receptacle in the Teutonic mind, — there for the first time to exhibit on a large scale its native vitality and find its appointed nourishment. Still, if we remember right, the chivalric poetry arose, not in the Germanic race, but among the Romanesque tribes of Spain, France,

Digitized by Google

and Italy; and flourished most where the Albigensian spirit had freest way and the power of the priesthood was most weakened. Sismondi remarks the coincidence, in the Romance literature, of an elevated sentiment towards woman, with bitter satire upon the clergy: and we apprehend it was a true instinct which led the poet, inspired with any delicate and noble love, to turn his antipathies upon the sacerdotal system. That system it is which to this day prevents the sanctity and lowers the dignity of domestic life in the South of Europe; and makes the difference between the love which figures in an Italian opera, and that which breathes in the strains of Tennyson. It cannot be pretended that the Papal and priestly institutions, at whose door the evil is to be laid, afford any true representation of the religion of Christ. Wherever the characteristic sentiments of Christianity have had free action, wherever the faith has prevailed that life is a divine trust, committed to souls dear to God, equal among themselves, and each the germ of an immortality, there, and there alone, has domestic affection been so touched with reverence and confidence, as to retain its freshness to the end, and afford a chastening discipline through life. The doctrines about the "Rights of Woman," which have sprung from theories of political equality, and disowned the partnership of religious sentiment, have invariably produced great moral laxity: and, in spite of high imaginative talk, fascinating to excitable natures, yield nothing truly noble, but only the monster greatness of mingled intellect and passion. The man and the woman can never learn each

Digitized by Google

other's infinite worth, except in the absence of the priest, and in the presence of their God. Who can deny that this secret has been learned among the lessons of a Christian civilization?

The credit assigned to Christianity as the foe of slavery is also, in our author's opinion, unmerited. No Apostle denounces the system; which receives indeed a sort of sanction from the silence of the New Testament respecting it, and from Paul's act of sending back Onesimus to his master Philemon. Good Pagan Emperors of Rome softened the rigors of slavery, but during the several centuries in which Christianity acted in the empire, it produced no opposition to the system. In modern times, serfdom was abolished by the kings in their desire to raise the chartered cities as an arm against the barons. And black slavery received its first act of abolition from atheistic France; its next from England, impelled by that one among her sects which least regards the letter of Scripture.

This style of criticism is so evidently founded on the conception of Christianity as an oracular system, bound to pronounce distinctly on all considerable matters, human or divine, that, in simply treating the religion as an historical development through the influence of reverence for a person, we have already suggested the reply. The operation of such a cause was necessarily gradual, and could not produce the sudden and general protests demanded by Mr. Newman. Its action was not through any revealed economy of social life, but through the introduction of men, one by one, into spiritual relations incompati-

Digitized by Google

ble with the sentiments of the slave. That Christianity opened its arms to the servile class at all, was enough: for in its embrace was the sure promise of emancipation. In proof of this we need no other witness than our author himself, who says:—

"Zeal for the liberation of serfs in Europe first rose in the breasts of the clergy, after the whole population had become nominally Christian. It was not men, but Christians, that the clergy of the Middle Ages desired to make free." —p. 167.

What more emphatic expression could the religion give of its hostility to slavery than this, that all men were to become Christians, and that no Christian should remain a slave? Is it imputed as a disgrace, that it put conversion before manumission, and brought them to God, ere it trusted them with themselves? To our mind this is the true and divine order, — a new life within to rule the new lot without, — Conscience, Lord of the Soul, invoked to succeed the feudal lord of the soil. If Christianity were patient of Heathenism, if it had no generous propagandism, it might be charged with narrowness in only redeeming its own. But its Missionary spirit forbade its ever providing itself with slaves from the Pagan class, while its own children had their liberty. It created the simultaneous obligation to make the Pagan a convert, and the convert free. That this tendency exhibited but faint traces in the earliest age of the Church is due, not merely to the small comparative numbers of the disciples, but no less to their expectation of an immediate close to this

Digitized by Google

world's affairs. The only reason why Paul sanctioned contentment with his condition in the converted slave was, that, for so short a time, it was not worth while for any man to change his state; he that was free was already the Lord's bondsman; and he that was bound, the Lord's freeman. In proportion as this anticipation retreated, society began to feel the tendency of the new religion. Doubtless the condition of the servile class was ameliorated by the legislation of good Pagan emperors: and not only the precepts of Seneca, but the edicts of Hadrian, Trajan, and Antoninus attest the growth of just and humane sentiments. But the steady agency of Christianity availed incomparably more than the happy accident of wisdom and virtue in a prince. All its ordinances were open indiscriminately to bond and free; nor was servile birth any disqualification for the discharge of Church functions, — from the humble office of the two slave-girls mentioned in Pliny's letter to Trajan, to the dignity of the Episcopate itself. This rule stands in strong contrast with the Roman law, according to which no public office could be held by a slave. The exercise of the sacred duties suspended the rights of the master, and in case of the permanent assumption of the monastic habit, or the appointment to a bishopric, entirely abolished them. The Christian indissolubility of marriage seriously curtailed the owner's established rights, though it was long before it openly took the *legal* place of the previous *contubernia*. The influence of the Church was vigorously exerted against the barbarous treatment of the servile class: and

Digitized by Google

Clement of Alexandria enjoins the bishop to reject the offerings of masters, "qui fame, verberibus, acerbo dominatu, familiam suam vexarent." And when an ill-used slave fled from the persecution of his owner to a Christian altar, he found a powerful protection in the officiating ecclesiastics; who were bound to intercede actively on his behalf, and, failing of success, to permit to him the usual shelter of the sanctuary. Constantine was the first to enact laws against separating the members of the same servile family; justifying his edict by the words, "Quis enim ferat liberos a parentibus, a fratribus uxores, a viris conjuges segregari?" Mr. Newman mentions, among the horrors of Roman slavery, that "young women of beautiful persons were sold as articles of voluptuousness": but he does not mention that the first Christian Emperors authorized the clergy to redeem from the *Lupanaria* the wretched victims who had there suffered the fate of St. Agnes; or that, by a law of Theodoric, the seducer of a slave girl was not only bound to her thenceforth, but subjected for life to her master's service. An indication of the direction which was assumed by the sympathies of the new religion is afforded by the fact, that, from the time of Constantine, the process of manumission was for the most part transferred to the Church, and formed part of the ceremonies at Easter, and the other ecclesiastical festivals. And under the auspices of Christian Emperors, the facilities for manumission were so greatly increased, that, after the impediments removed by Justinian, freedom became the rule, and slavery the exception, among the poor-

Digitized by Google

er subjects of the empire.* So clear, indeed, is the tendency of Christianity on this matter, that if our author had made his attack from the opposite side, and contended that its doctrines *proved too much* against servitude, and assumed with too little qualification the capacity of each man for self-rule, we should have felt more hesitation in expressing our dissent. We certainly feel that the religious impulse under which, in Christian times, every assault upon slavery has been conducted, requires for its wise and efficient operation a larger admixture of worldly moderation and economical forethought, than zeal and generosity are willing to allow.

But few words will be needful in reference to our author's theory of the Reformation. In his view, this great event is due, not to the *Bible*, but to *Free Learning*, especially to the moral works of Cicero and Boethius, which "effected what (strange to think) the New Testament could not do" (p. 158). He inclines to think that the change would have been better brought about, if Luther had never lived; and, while crediting the Pagan writers with the recovery of Europe, convicts the Scriptures of ineffi-

* See Plin. Traj. Imp. Lib. x. ep. 97. Justinian's Novella, cxxiii. 4. v. 2. Clem. Alex. const. apost. iv. Cod. Theodos. ii. tit. 25. Gibbon, Ch. 44, and Blair's Inq. into the State of Slavery amongst the Romans, *passim;* especially pp. 127, 168–174; and 247, where it is shown that "St Paul would, under any circumstances, have had no choice, but to send Onesimus to his master. The detention of a fugitive slave was considered the same offence as a theft, and would, no doubt, infer liability to prosecution for damages, under that head, or under the rules with regard to corrupting slaves, — or the Aquilian law, respecting reparation of injury done."

Digitized by Google

ciency, for not having prevented its previous lapse into barbarism and superstition.

The Reformation arose, *not* from the Bible, *but* from Free Learning! This appears to us like saying that the harvest comes, not from the seed-corn, but from good farming; or that the ship makes its voyage, not by the wind, but by navigation. Would our author have had the Bible produce the Reformation *without* Free Learning, — that is, without being applied to the European mind at all? If not, what is the meaning of this false antithesis between the state of the human faculties and the object on which they are employed? and of the strange exaction that the Scriptures, once put on parchment, should be able, whether men could procure and read them or not, to overrule all the causes of internal corruption and external ruin, beneath which the Roman civilization succumbed? A "self-sustaining power" like this, a power to remain independent of perturbation from foreign influences, and to evolve like phenomena from the most unlike conditions of the human mind, is intrinsically inconceivable. Be a religion ever so divine, from the moment that it is consigned to human media and delivered to the keeping of mankind, it inevitably shares the fate of all the intellectual and spiritual possessions of our race, and rises and sinks with the tides of history. If our author's favorites, — the Latin moralists, — accomplished at the revival of learning what the Scriptures could not do, they availed as little as the Scriptures to prevent its previous decline; and when Europe "sank into the gulf of Popery," she had Cicero and

Digitized by Google

Boethius, no less than "the Bible in her hands." But "without free intellect," as Mr. Newman truly observes of the ancient Attic literature in the hands of the Greeks of Constantinople, "the works of their fathers did their souls no good": and is not the plea equally valid, that, without free intellect, the works of evangelists and apostles could do the souls of disciples no good? No Protestant ever disputed the need of Free Learning as an essential condition of the Reformation: and the only question is, whether the modern changes in the religion of Christendom arose from the free study of the Scriptures, or from the free study of the Pagan writers? It is difficult to discuss such a question with gravity. If our author really thinks that the Huguenots derived their inspiration from Seneca and the Puritans from Cicero; if he imagines Marcus Antoninus in the pocket of the Brownists, and Epictetus beneath the pillow of John Knox, he entertains a conception of modern history more peculiar than that of the Anglican theologians themselves. We had always imagined, that, from the time of Petrarch, the ancient literature was nowhere more assiduously studied than in Italy; which, nevertheless, witnessed no "improvement of spiritual doctrine," and was not assuming, under the patronage of the Medicis and the Papacy of Leo, a course of development very promising for religious truth and moral earnestness. The assertion that the Reformation would have been more beneficent, had the Reformers never lived, belongs to a kind of speculation which appears to us fruitful in delusion. That concurrently with the rise

Digitized by Google

of those great leaders there existed a general ferment of mind in Europe favorable to their influence, is undeniable; that, if they had not appeared, this condition would have manifested itself in some direction, drawing into it many of the energies which they bespoke, we have no doubt; but that this substituted phenomenon would have been "the Reformation," analogous in its characteristics and equivalent in its merits, is a proposition beyond the reach of human evidence, belonging to the computation of contingents, the *scientia media* of Molina's God. It is as little possible to conceive of the Reformation without Luther, as to imagine an Evangelicism without Paul, or even a Christianity without Christ.

A few topics in this volume we must leave untouched; an omission which will be more readily excused, we fear, than the handling of so many. In parting from it, we restate our conviction that Mr. Newman exaggerates the resources of the purely subjective side of Religion, and undervalues its objective conditions. A spirit like his own may doubtless draw, from the mere depth of its inner experience, a faith and trust adequate to the noble governance of life. But just as the Intellect of mere metaphysicians, spinning assiduously from its own centre without fixed points of attachment for its threads, produces as many tissues of thought as there are original thinkers; so the Soul of mere spiritualists, in attempting to evolve every thing from within without any datum of historical reverence, must create as many religions as there are worshippers. As we have faith in a Common Reason, so have we in a

Digitized by Google

Common Conscience, of mankind; the eye, in the one case of natural, in the other of divine truth: but liable, in both instances, to the same law, — that *objects* not ideal but real be given for perception and appreciation; objects, not different for each observer, but large and conspicuous enough to fix simultaneously the universal vision. The grand objects of the physical universe, discernible from every latitude, look in at the understanding of all nations, and secure the unity of Science. And the glorious persons of human history, imperishable from the traditions of every civilized people, keeping their sublime glance upon the Conscience of ages, create the unity of Faith. And if it hath pleased God the Creator to fit up one system with one Sun, to make the daylight of several worlds; so may it fitly have pleased God the Revealer to kindle amid the ecliptic of history One Divine Soul, to glorify whatever lies within the great year of his moral Providence, and represent the Father of Lights. The exhibition of Christ as his Moral Image has maintained in the souls of men a common spiritual type to correct the aberrations of their individuality, to unite the humblest and the highest, to merge all minds into one family, — and *that*, the family of God.

Digitized by Google

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.*

[From the Westminster Review for April, 1850.]

We have often wondered that the English, the most sensible, but the most illogical of nations, should endure so patiently the intricacies and uncertainties of their law. That the careless and acute Athenian should frequent his city's courts, with keen relish for the subtlest pleadings by which sophistry could entangle justice, is in keeping with the characteristics of his vivacious and intellectual race. But the docile attention with which an English grazier or tea-dealer, apter to deal with things than with words, will listen to long arguments on forms of evidence and points of law, content no less to let the decision

---

* 1. The Church, the Crown, and the State: their Junction or their Separation; considered in Two Sermons bearing reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. By the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, M. A., Perpetual Curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge. Third Edition. London. 1850.

2. Lives of the English Saints. London. 1844, 1845, &c.

3. The Temporalities of the Established Church, as they are, and as they might be. By William Beeston, an old Churchman. London. 1850.

4. Religion, the Church, and the People; a Sermon. By J. Hamilton Thom. London. 1849.

Digitized by Google

go by flaw than if taken on the merits, is a truly singular phenomenon. The man has no taste for verbal gymnastics; and fine distinctions, if he can see them at all, give him the headache. The fact is, however, he has an obtuse feeling that, through all this play of ingenuity, justice on the whole gets substantially done. Moreover, the mere legal quibbles are used as instruments of *escape*, not of condemnation, and fall in with his leanings to mercy. Once begin to confiscate the patrimonies of his neighbors by help of legal informalities, or to hang men by sophism, and he will give full proof of not only his love for real justice, but his aversion for logical semblance.

As it is with law, so with divinity. Give the English layman something like *right* on the whole, and he will not begrudge the lawyers an ample margin for the manœuvres of a questionable skill. Give him something like *truth* on the whole, by which he may guide himself and live, and he will indulge the divines with license of unlimited talk, and even look with reverent admiration on ponderous libraries written about his simple creed. He looks no further into theology than the demeanor of the parish clergyman. Let the vicar and his curate read the service impressively, preach no novelties, light no candles, look after the village schools, make themselves useful at the board of guardians, and keep the neighbors on pleasant terms with one another, and, for aught he cares, they may suit themselves with any doctrine between Whitgift and Grotius, Laud and Tillotson. He looks on the clerical eagerness about dogma as he does on his wife's gossip and volumi-

Digitized by Google

nous correspondence, — as inherent in the genius of the class, and somehow related to the nice perception and voluble enthusiasm of which he himself feels the fascination. Only you must not ask him to take a part: his business-like habits are apt to bruise the graces; and his plain understanding rubs out all the fine distinctions of the creeds. He leaves these things to ecclesiastics, and with so free an indulgence that there is scarcely any intensity of bigotry and absurdity that may not have its way, provided he and his church are not positively committed to them. Folly and narrow-heartedness in one priest are counterbalanced by the wisdom and charity of another; the Calvinism of a Simeon by the Arminianism of a Maltby; the sacramental doctrine of Pusey by the ethical theology of Arnold. The English are not a speculative people. And so long as they see such men as Whately, Thirlwall, and Sumner amicably seated on the same bench as Blomfield and Philpotts, no religious Churchman will miss there a representative of his faith, and the Established Church will gain the credit of being reasonably open to varieties of opinion. The decisions in the Articles may be stringent, the pretensions of the ordination-service arrogant, and the imprecations of the creed unflinching; but while they are not pressed into any visible form of ecclesiastical action, the persons of a few mild and charitable bishops suffice to counteract their effect, and to persuade men, fresh from the very sound of her anathemas, that they belong to the most liberal of churches.

Till within the last fifteen years, the English clergy

Digitized by Google

have well understood the conditions on which this favorable interpretation of their system depends. They have not, indeed, always confined their controversies within friendly bounds; and an over-zealous bishop, like Dr. Marsh, might draw around his diocese a close cordon of eighty-seven questions for the exclusion of Calvinistic preachers. But they have kept these differences to themselves: they have not driven the secular by-stander to take sides; they have, rather, relied on the inattention of the majority of laymen to dogmatic divinity; and, amid internal heart-burnings, have accepted compliments from neutral admirers, on the generous latitude which admits into one communion Parker and Burnet, Newton and Paley. For some time past, however, they have evinced more ingenuousness and less discretion; the boast of variety they have exchanged for pretensions to unity; the inconsistencies which constituted their strength they would wipe out as a reproach. The Anglican talks in high strain of the Catholic consent, as if he were not contradicted by the Bible-Society preacher in the next parish church. The Evangelical glorifies the Lutheran Reformation, which his Tractarian neighbor denounces as an apostasy; and the communion to which they have both taken vows is praised by the one as the great ally, by the other as the appointed barrier, to the Protestantism of Europe. Both parties affect to be ignorant that the Church of England is the product of compromise, and, in its scheme of doctrine and usage, has been voted into its form of existence by the accidents of party and the confused action and

Digitized by Google

reaction of opinion. They pretend that it is constructed around an "Idea": as well might you look for such a thing in a Parliamentary resolution, framed to catch votes. It is a dangerous employment to hunt for theories in a system of pacified discrepancies; for while such theories are sure to be mutually destructive, each necessarily insists on having the whole system to itself, and will let no lodgings under the same roof to its contradictory. Hence, differences, wide as those which rent Christendom asunder in the sixteenth century, coexist in the national Church; but coexist only till one class is strong enough to expel the other, or the nation provoked enough to silence both. It is now conspicuous, that the scope for various thought within our ecclesiastical pale is an involuntary merit. It is no result of a wise tolerance, but is openly treated as the vice of a lax discipline. The Bishop of Exeter leaves us in no doubt as to what the Church would be, if *he* might have the weeding of it; and could the past, as well as the present, be cited before courts under his inspiration, it is curious to think how her history and libraries, no less than her pulpits, would be thinned. The noblest lights of her literature would be put out. Had the Episcopal rules now contended for always prevailed, Barrow would have been known only by his lectures upon optics, and Samuel Clarke as an editor of Cæsar; Tillotson would not have preached at Lincoln's Inn, or Butler at the Rolls; no Cudworth would have meditated between heathen speculation and Christian faith; where the names of Berkeley and Cum-

Digitized by Google

berland stand, the history of philosophy would have been blank; Erasmus would have found no biographer in Jortin, and Wallis no admirer in Whately; Lowth and Whitby, Paley and Coppleston, — in short, all men whom a mild and modest temper has disinclined towards extreme views, or a clear intellect disqualified for sacerdotal pretensions, would have been lost to the services or adornment of the Church. The question which the ecclesiastical parties of the day are now trying among themselves is, whether a stupid uniformity, impossible to genius and repulsive to scrupulous integrity, shall be forced upon the state religion. Momentous as that question is, it wakes up others far more ominous. The litigation in the Gorham case is on too large a scale, and in too curious a court, not to attract regards seldom directed to theological affairs. Men who doze through the sermon at their parish church are all attention at the rare chance of hearing dogma translated from the language of the pulpit into that of the bar. "Now, at least," they think, "we shall learn what all this is about. We shall get some notion what the schemes are between which we have to choose." We are much mistaken if the result has not been general among the educated laity, of utter disgust at *both;* of amazement to find themselves thrown back upon the scholastic jargon of the Middle Ages, and into the dreams of an unawakened civilization; of shame at the utter unreality, the emptiness, the cold distance from nature and life, of the tenets said to constitute the religion of this nation. Every Englishman has an interest in the Church, which is in-

Digitized by Google

trusted with the highest culture of the people, and for that end has been endowed with resources unexampled among Protestant spiritual corporations; which monopolizes the Crown and the Universities; which is protected by the oaths of Parliament, and represented in the House of Peers; which distributes over the land an organized body of twelve thousand priests, whose primate is the highest of subjects, while her curates are in contact with the lowest; whose vicissitudes mingle everywhere with the history of his country, and sometimes almost make it; and which still, in the eye of the world, represents the place which England is to hold in the ultimate retrospect on Christendom. In wading through the recent arguments of counsel on baptismal regeneration and prevenient grace, we could not help asking ourselves, "How will this whole scheme of doctrine look when gazed at from an historic distance, — like that from which we regard the banishment of Anaxagoras, or the trial of Socrates? When classed among the systems of human thought upon divine things, and thrown into the series in which are reviewed the myths of Plato, the ethics of Antoninus, the Immanent Cause of Spinoza, and the moral theology of Kant, what figure will this Religion of the English in the nineteenth century present?" The future historian of opinion will write of us in this strain: — "The people who spoke the language of Shakspeare were great in the constructive arts: the remains of their vast works evince an extraordinary power of combining and economizing labor; their colonies were spread over both

Digitized by Google

hemispheres, and their industry penetrated to the remotest tribes; they knew how to subjugate nature and to govern men: but the weakness of their thought presented a strange contrast to the vigor of their arm; and though they were an earnest people, their conceptions of human life and its Divine Author seem to have been of the most puerile nature. Some orations have been handed down, — apparently delivered before one of their most dignified tribunals, — in which (as the notes to the last critical edition fully establish) the question is discussed, 'In what way the washing of new-born babies according to certain rules prevented God's hating them.' The curious feature is, that the discussion turns entirely upon the *manner* in which this wetting operated; and no doubt seems to have been entertained by disputants, judges, or audience, that, without it, a child or other person dying would fall into the hands of an angry Deity, and be kept alive for ever to be tortured in a burning cave. Now, all researches into the contemporary institutions of the island show that its religion found its chief support among the classes possessing no mean station or culture, and that the education for the priesthood was the highest which the country afforded. This strange belief must be taken, therefore, as the measure, not of popular ignorance, but of the most intellectual faith. A philosophy and worship embodying such a superstition can present nothing to reward the labor of research."

It is a mistake to suppose that tenets of this kind may be prudently let alone, as out of contact with the interests of this life; and to urge as a plea for

Digitized by Google

indifference and silence, that theories about the future may be left to be corrected by the future. On the contrary, there is no heavier incubus upon the present than false visions and untrustful fears. Ideal though they be, they are a heavier burden than unequal taxes and excessive toil. They depress the springs of hope, mar the simplicity of speech, set a police watch around the movements of thought, and drain off the natural joyousness of good hearts: and this, the paralysis of the person, is worse than the crippling of the lot. But their power will prove adequate to *both;* and only waits, till emboldened by indulgence, to crown the possession of the invisible world with the conquest of the visible. Already the very superstition of which we have spoken exercises no despicable tyranny, and is constantly demanding more. For instance, we were recently present at the following scene. An artisan, who had an infant in dangerous illness, hastened to the nearest clergyman, and implored him to come and baptize the child. The clergyman, a person of more sense and kindness than orthodoxy, questioned him as to the grounds of so urgent a wish, and intimated that, in his view, the admonition of parents, rather than any mystic operation on the child, constituted the essence of the rite; so that, where the parental duties were about to be cancelled by death, he could scarcely feel that his ministrations would be in place. The man, thus encouraged to speak out, protested that neither he nor his wife had the slightest faith in baptism. "But then, Sir," he added, "our parson will never bury the poor child if she has n't been sprinkled."

Digitized by Google

We know this to be a case of constant occurrence. The clergy are habitually employed to perform a rite on whose efficacy no one present has the faintest reliance, and which is submitted to as a part of the funeral fee; and they are thus the occasion of surrounding the cradle of the tenderest death with sullen unbelief and hypocrisy. The guilty pretence is not felt by the parents as a disgrace, since it is the appointed purchase of Christian interment for their child. The Church has here ordained a struggle between veracity and affection; and who can wonder that her minister is used as the tool of falsehood, rather than endured as the agent of tyranny? In every direction the signs abound of a disposition, not only to retain, but to extend the pressure of Church ceremony and dogma upon public institutions and private life. What is the gist of the whole controversy between the National School Society and the Educational Committee of Privy Council about the management of parochial schools? There is no question here, as between sect and sect; for no one can belong to the governing board of such school without signing a solemn declaration that he is a *bonâ fide* member of the Church of England; but the National Society would revive the sacramental test, and compel him to qualify by taking the communion thrice in the year. There is no question about the character of the *religious* instruction to be given in the schools; for it is consigned to the clergymen of the parish, with a final reference to the diocesan, in case of any source of grievance or complaint; and it is imperative that, with the Holy Scriptures, the Lit-

Digitized by Google

urgy and Catechism of the Established Church shall be taught: but the National Society requires that the Bishop should be the last appeal on *all* school matters, secular as well as spiritual. In short, the Committee of Privy Council, as trustee of the Parliamentary grant, insists on a fair proportion of lay influence, of local administration, of secular instruction; the National Society regards as a grievance every thing that threatens clerical ascendency, or raises mental culture into independent importance. Not to educate, but to restrain education within limits suitable to a faith in baptismal regeneration, is the almost avowed end: and this end is to be accomplished, if possible, at the public cost, — not out of ecclesiastical funds, but from the exchequer of a many-faithed and half-dissentient nation. If any one is simple enough to doubt the possibility of so monstrous a demand, his incredulity will be removed by the proceedings of a "meeting of the friends of national education on strictly Church principles," held at Willis's rooms, February 7th. On that occasion, Mr. Napier, M. P., expounded the duty of the State, with the peculiar mellifluous modesty which finds favor in ecclesiastical assemblies: that duty, he said, "resolved itself into the confiding to the accredited instruments of God the duty of bringing the minds of the children of God into harmony with his mind and his will." If these terms had less unction, they would have more sense. But we can hardly err in supposing that the "accredited instruments of God" are the gentlemen in holy orders; that by "his mind and his will" are meant "strictly Church princi-

Digitized by Google

ples"; that "the children of God" are the youth of these realms. The speaker, therefore, intimating that "the question ought to be easy of settlement," requires that the whole education of the country be delivered over into the hands of the clergy. And this he affirms to be, "not preference for the Church, but justice"; declaring the refusal of it by the Privy Council to be "an attempt to exclude God from the government of the world; to separate Providence from man; to set up the wisdom of man against God's truth." Is any one so ill-read in ecclesiastical history as not to know the savor of this language? The tact of our forefathers discovered that a cardinal's fit of humility, and tears of unusual pathos from the servant of all, were the sure prelude to some high audacity of the triple crown; and the tone of aggrieved innocence in a church is the common disguise of meditated usurpation. The resolution which immediately follows Mr. Napier's demand of "justice to the Church," throws a further light upon the meaning of this plaintive phraseology. It prefers against the educational Committee of Council the complaint, that they "*have in their corporate capacity no definite creed*, but encourage indiscriminately various and conflicting forms of belief." And, in urging this complaint, Mr. G. A. Denison ingeniously states the only remedy which the ecclesiastical conscience can accept:—

"The greatest danger of all was the practical negation of definite truth which was found so largely in the Church itself, from that spirit of compromise which led men, for the sake of what they erroneously called peace, to fritter

Digitized by Google

away the objective truth of God; from that sickly sentiment which made men shrink from unfurling the banner of God, because on that banner were written the awful words, 'This is the catholic faith, which unless man believes he cannot be saved.' The effects of this spirit of negation and of compromise were not far to seek. The question of education had been, from the first, between the maintenance or the surrender of the creed and doctrines of the church catholic, and of the catechism of the Church of England. All education flowed from, and necessarily depended upon, the doctrine of regeneration in baptism, — that doctrine, which had so monstrously been of late made the subject of appeal to a court not necessarily composed of churchmen, and having necessarily no spiritual character."

The State, then, acting through the Committee of Council, does wrong, — a wrong to the Church, — in "encouraging various and conflicting forms of belief." The "encouragement," however, consists simply in letting them alone; in setting up no inquisition into the orthodoxy of the voluntary schools to which it renders aid; in not forcing Jewish infants to learn the Sermon on the Mount, Presbyterian teachers to inculcate episcopal succession, Socinians to profess the Athanasian Creed, and Quakers to take the Eucharist. The crime of the government — the injury it inflicts upon the Church — is in allowing these heretics to teach any thing at all: they should be wholly ignored; made to pay for the instruction of their neighbors' children — perhaps their own — in what is abominable in their eyes; but be left to their native darkness, until they repent of the error of their ways. Poor, injured Church! Was

Digitized by Google

there ever a harder case? Was ever innocence so buffeted? How can she discharge her commission on these terms? They are nothing less than an Egyptian cruelty, demanding bricks and withholding straw. Is she not intrusted with the sacraments, without which there is no salvation? And how *can* she dispense these, and indulge her mercy for imperilled souls, if deluded parents are allowed to exercise a vain self-will, and train their children in the fatal errors of an unbaptized intelligence? How can she be faithful, if sectaries, whom she is bound to treat as aliens and pity as apostates, are to be admitted as subjects equal under the law? — if she is to be responsible to infidel or schismatical legislators and their latitudinarian commissions? — if she is not to feel herself above the people's will in her use of the people's money, and meet no rival to undo her work in dispensing this world's goods for another world's blessings? It is not possible to mistake the tendency of all this lamentation. The plaintiff of this class would be thankful for a discriminating earthquake, that should swallow up, without fault of his, all people who frequent mass-houses and conventicles, and get rid of all difficulty, by rounding off the nation into the old ecclesiastical integrity, paring away the ravelled edges of dissent, and leaving the Church smooth and trim as a texture selvaged every way. Nay, he must be the most illogical of men, if he would not contribute, by a free use of direct persecution, to the same result. If the State is bound to help only the true Church, is it not bound to hinder the false ones?

Digitized by Google

Why mulct the dissenter's pocket on behalf of God's truth, and leave his person free to propagate a lie? If, according to the doctrine of the Anglican clergy and the French police, "the duty of every government is to combat false ideas, and to direct those which are true by placing itself boldly at the head of them," * — it is folly to go one-armed into the combat, brandishing a left-handed encouragement, and letting the heavy fist of repression hang down as if under the spell of palsy. Unless it can be shown — and assuredly it cannot — that the sword and the rack are ineffectual for the eradication of sects, the same obligation which pledges the public treasure pledges no less the penal law to the "definite creed" of the government "in its corporate capacity." Nor could we ever see any reason, on "Church principles," for squeamishness upon the matter. Eternal consequences must override all the lesser humanities. You make no scruple about shooting a score of mutineers to prevent the disorganization of an army: why hesitate to burn up a small sect, to stop the perdition of a people? To believe in the necessity of baptism, we are told, is "fundamentally vital to salvation"; and hence "all education must flow from this doctrine, and the State is bound to have it taught to the people. But if salvation includes among its conditions a *belief* in the rite's necessity, much more must it involve, as an inner nucleus of essentiality, the *actual rite* itself; and the government which is to sanction only baptismal

* See the Proclamation of M. Carlier, Police Minister, Feb. 10.

Digitized by Google

teaching must *à fortiori* tolerate only baptismal practice. It is absurd to enforce the doctrine and not secure the thing. Then why not provide a State font at every market cross, and baptize under inspection of the police? Why not enact penalties against the "pretended holy orders" of dissenters, by which a spurious and ineffectual imitation of the divine charm is palmed off upon simple people? You punish quacks who destroy life by giving medicines which they know not how to handle: why not put away heretics who ruin souls by administering a rite that turns from a sacrament to a poison in their hands? To allow the self-will of *parents* any voice in the matter is the mere imbecility of false indulgence. It has for ages been held, that a father has no power against the *life* of his children; it is now generally acknowledged, that he must not be at liberty to suppress their *intelligence;* and shall we leave to him the right to sequestrate their *salvation?* To limit by penal law the minor excesses of the *patria potestas*, and refuse a like protection against this most tremendous injury, is the grossest inconsistency; and it should be made the duty of the detective force to ferret out every unbaptized child, and take him to the nearest successor of the Apostles. These consequences of the "strictly Church principle" are so obvious, that, if they are not openly mentioned, it can scarcely be that they are yet undiscerned. At all events, if our Anglican clergy make no immediate proposal to revive the penal laws, it is not for want of premises suitable for its defence: the requisite logic is ready at a mo-

Digitized by Google

ment's notice, and only slumbers within the theory till the dawn of some reactionary crisis favors its waking into activity.

It appears to be shocking in the eyes of our spiritual guides that any one but themselves should look into the doctrines which they inculcate, — discuss them, — do any thing with them but believe them. Holy hands are lifted up in horror when such mysteries are approached by the gaze of a layman's uncommissioned mind; and a divine patent is claimed not only for dispensing, but for discerning, sacred truth. That men like Lord Campbell, accustomed only to the rules of profane evidence, should exercise their judicial understanding upon a sacramental proposition, affects the perpetual curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, with lively consternation: —

"At this very instant, one of the vital doctrines of our faith is being *judged*, — is being *called in question*, — is being *argued and debated about*, as though it had not been the creed of the Catholic Church, known and witnessed to from the Apostles downwards. It is being argued, and is to be judged, by those who, in good truth, cannot by the laws of Christ sit in judgment at all, seeing the laws of Christ have given them no such power.

"How can *they* judge of Christ's doctrine, who have had no *commission* from *Christ*?

"How can they judge of what is TRUTH, to whom the word of truth has not been committed?

"How can *they* take upon themselves, even for a moment, to let the question move past them, *as a question*, who know not that the FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY lies in the doctrine which they dare to handle?

"It is an awful thing even to be, as we are now, for

Digitized by Google

months in suspense as to what the State may pronounce about a doctrine which is fundamentally vital to salvation.

"It is an awful thing to see men of a mere temporal power dive into the mysteries of the deep things of the Spirit.

"It is an awful thing to see the men of Cæsar — as of Cæsar — plunge so recklessly, and with such utter confusion, into the things of God." — p. 16.

This sacerdotal arrogance might be permitted to have its way, and spend itself against the energies of the age, if it were the outpouring of some private sect, delivered from the pulpit of an oratory, or flattering to the owners of an Ebenezer. The visions of Swedenborg, the pretensions of Poughkeepsie seers, and the Mormon inspirations of Joe Smith the prophet, may be left without remonstrance to try their strength upon the ignorance of the age or on the permanent tendencies to psychological illusion. And if any number of Oxford graduates, whose heads have been turned with ecclesiology, are convinced that they hold the power of the keys, and if, by the combined force of bad arguments and good works, they can induce country gentlemen and suburban shopkeepers to employ them, *at their own charges*, in opening and shutting the kingdom of heaven, no one would have the least title to complain. But when this sort of profession occupies the parish church and claims the parish school, when it lives upon the farmer's tithe, and grows on chapter lands, and thrives with bishops' rents, its proud repulse to lay investigation becomes ridiculous. It is

Digitized by Google

open to criticism, not from the controversialist only, but from the politician. While every theology is exposed to the question, Is it true? a State Church theology is liable to the more practical inquiry, Is it adapted to the condition of the national mind? Does it express this people's noblest thought and purest aspiration? Does it stand in sympathy with their common affections, yet above their highest culture? These questions a government is *bound* to ask, and public men to urge; and a Church that cannot answer them in good affirmatives, or that will not condescend to answer them at all, is disqualified for longer occupancy of the national endowment. A priesthood which, asserting a Divine commission, cannot submit to any lower question than *Is it* true? nor even to that, except from its own tribunals, so that question and answer shall both issue from itself, is, *ipso facto*, unfit for alliance with the State. The temporal powers must estimate the claim by an humbler rule: "Does our nation *think* it true?" If the reply be negative, lament as we may the perversity of human nature, the Church is no better able to teach the people than if she were *not* infallible.

We are well aware that this is "low Erastianism"; we know the kind of feeling with which such principles are regarded by divines like Mr. Bennett. The argument of his pamphlet, however, has done much to confirm us in their truth. He boldly denies any obligation on the part of the Church to accept or perform conditions imposed by the State; asserts, that it is unfettered by any civil engagements; is not bound, except as a matter of painful necessity, to

Digitized by Google

recognize Parliament at all; and ought to have all the temporalities of an earthly establishment with the spiritual absoluteness of a heavenly hierarchy. The Church's alliance is not with the State, but with the Crown. These positions are made to rest entirely on the arbitrary power of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, in whose reigns the Anglican Church was constituted, and on the then undeveloped state of our representative institutions. At the time of the Reformation, and long after, Parliament was of no account: its very existence, as a power in the State, the Church at its formation never intended to recognize. The oath of supremacy was, and is, to the sovereign alone; to the sovereign, moreover, not as constitutional head of the empire, but as ruling by divine right. Churchmen have "the high privilege and blessing of looking on him as our anointed terrestrial governor under Christ." "Thus the case stands as between the Church and the sovereign ruler; but between the Church and the State the question is entirely different. The sovereign exercises his office as coming from GOD, — the State as coming from MAN. The State is nothing more than an incorporation of a *legislative*, *judicial*, and *executive* power, appointed, regulated, and changing from time to time according to the constitution of a country, which in England depends on the will of the people, and is not in any way of *necessity* ecclesiastical." "While adhering to the one as God's appointed terrestrial governor, it might be severed from the other as being at enmity with God." — p. 7.

After this profession of anti-state-church loyalty,

Digitized by Google

we had concluded that the "*anointed person*" might rely on Mr. Bennett's implicit obedience; while an heretical *Parliament* — unless it stopped the mouth of its judicial committee — would be in imminent danger of losing his services. What was our amazement to find, on the one hand, that, on the first sign in "God's terrestrial governor" of any deviation (as in James the Second's reign) from "true allegiance to the Church," he would disobey the crown (p. 10); and on the other, that, though his "conscience should be aggrieved" by "unjust law," and he should feel the time come to "obey God rather than man," he could never think of resigning his pastoral office on that account; it would be far too cruel to "the little ones in Christ," — "the POOR," — whose "faith hangs on *his;* whose dutifulness and adherence to the Church depend on *his*." "He must not dissolve that bond that was made for him by the Holy Ghost *lightly*." He must think that it is "the HIRELING only that fleeth, because he careth not for the sheep." He must anticipate the question which will be put to him at the great day, — "*Where is thy flock, thy beautiful flock?*" (p. 32.) And so, with a bleeding conscience, in a Church bereft of catholic truth, the preacher proposes to remain "*Perpetual* Curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge."

If, however, he abides by the flock, and acquiesces in Parliamentary law, it is more than could fairly be expected, and must not be misinterpreted. The Church entered into its engagements in the time of the Tudors, and has nothing to do with any of the follies which society may have committed since.

Digitized by Google

Cranmer having had no notion of the Reform Bill, the clergy are not bound to recognize the existing legislature; and Queen Victoria is to them only a perpetuation of Henry the Eighth.

"In regard to this point, i. e. *that in the reign of Henry the Eighth the whole power of the State resided virtually in the person of the sovereign*, it must be evident that the Church, though she embraced (in consideration of an anointed king, set over her in the Lord) the idea of obedience to him personally under Christ, she never contemplated the possibility of the present form of government, by which the sovereign personally is of no power whatsoever.

"Henry the Eighth, and the sovereigns succeeding him, were absolute and despotic; and their own will was sufficient argument for acts of power, however arbitrary. Their ministers and their Parliaments were mere shadows. They had none of that constitutional strength, by the voice of the people, which now makes them irresistible. By the abdication of James the Second, and the introduction of a new family upon the throne, opportunity was taken to break down this despotic power of the Tudor and Stuart kings. Acts were passed in the reign of William the Third, limiting and defining the royal prerogative. From that time — the democratic power gradually increasing, and the constitution, in every change, becoming more of the people and less of the sovereign — now it has come to pass that all real government and power is lodged, not in the crown, but in the prime minister, — that officer of the State becoming so, virtually, by the voice of the people. So that now, as in practice we know it is, the Church is governed, not as the Church promised she would be governed, by the anointed of the Lord, but by the voice of some accidental person, whomsoever the convulsions of politics may from time to time cast up into the seat of power."— p. 23.

Digitized by Google

Now, what would be thought of any other corporation, not ecclesiastical, that should reason in this way, and not only plead its charter against Parliament, but contend that the royal control can only be exercised according to the forms and offices of the sixteenth century? Besides, the more absolute the monarch to whom the Church pledged her obedience, the less questionable his right to delegate his powers to whom he will, and distribute to Parliament a share of the prerogative once centred in him. And how stands the historical fact, as to the alleged submission of the Church to the mere person of the sovereign? The preamble to the "Act (1st Elizabeth) for the Uniformity of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments," runs thus: —

"When, at the death of our late Sovereign Lord King Edward the Sixth, there remained one uniform order of Common Service and Prayer, and of the Administration of Sacraments, Rites, and Ceremonies, in the Church of England, which was set forth in one book, intituled, 'The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, in the Church of England, *authorized by Act of Parliament*, holden in the fifth and sixth years of our said late Sovereign Lord King Edward the Sixth, intituled, An Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, the which was *repealed and taken away by Act of Parliament*, in the first year of the reign of our late Sovereign and Lady Queen Mary, to the great decay of the due honor of God, and discomfort to the professors of the truth of Christ's religion;

"Be it therefore enacted by the *authority of this present Parliament*," &c.

Digitized by Google

If the unqualified subservience of the Tudor Parliaments to the royal will be urged against such early evidence, we have only to come down to a later period, — a period disgraceful indeed in many ways, but not without adequate memory and experience of Parliamentary power; and in the 14th of Charles the Second we have a similar wording in the Bartholomew Act of Uniformity: —

"Be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, *by the advice and with the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and of the Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same*, that all and singular ministers, in any Cathedral, collegiate, or parish church or chapel, or other place of public worship within this realm of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, shall be bound to say and use the Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Celebration and Administration of both the Sacraments, and all other the Public and Common-Prayer, in such order and form as is mentioned in the said book, annexed and joined this present Act, and intituled, 'The Book of Common-Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments,'" &c.

Here is an act of Parliament, under which the prayers are weekly read, and the sacraments administered throughout all England; which introduced alterations on the previous forms; which ordained the severest penalties against recusant clergymen; and, by enforcement of such penalties, vacated two thousand livings, and created the body of Dissenters. Yet the Church, we are told, ought to hold on its way in sublime unconsciousness of a House of Commons; conniving perhaps, occasionally, at its exist-

Digitized by Google

ence, and using, for clerical purposes, "*the disagreeable truth*," that "the real seat of power" lies there; but always prepared to fall back upon divine right, and disown the constitutional state as a vulgar innovation. Mr. Bennett himself, in seeking redress for what he is pleased to call "the religious disabilities of the Church of England," does not deign to speak to the High Court of Parliament. He petitions her Majesty in person, and prays *her* to take in hand this disagreeable business of dealing with the Houses. And what is the message with which he would send her Majesty down to St. Stephen's on his behalf? Why, to tell the Peers and the Commons, that they, "being no longer the Church, but having the Church under their dominion, *must be demanded to forego that dominion as being an unrighteous usurpation!*" (p. 27.) A pleasant errand to "the real seat of power"!

It is a strange infatuation to imagine that Englishmen will ever recognize in their Church an independent, self-governing, immutable body, exempt from constitutional restraints, and shielded from those changes which the progress of knowledge and the vicissitudes of thought introduce everywhere else. They are not in general very well read in the history of their country; but every boy, from the upper classes of a British or National school, knows enough of the course of ecclesiastical affairs during the last three centuries, to make the pretensions of the Anglican priests to catholic unity appear preposterous. Moreover, a claim that might pass without challenge when all the religion of the land was centred in one

Digitized by Google

communion, becomes not only offensive, but intrinsically incredible, when the characteristics of a devout mind, and the faithfulness of the Christian life, present themselves without visible distinction in numerous churches. A citizen of a large town can wander every Sunday into the chapel to hear mass, or into the Friends' meeting-house to keep silence, or into the Wesleyan, or Independent, or Unitarian chapel, to hear in each a different doctrine of nature and of grace, expounded perhaps in a manner quite as edifying as the rector's. How can you persuade that man that Christ has only one church in England? — that the rector is distinguished from all these people, as a divine messenger from a set of impostors? — that he is appointed to open and shut the heavenly kingdom, while they are set for a delusion and a snare? If you should provoke his sense of justice by this style of talk, does he not know that Parliament, that once put the Roman Catholics out of the parish churches, could put any of these sects *in?* — or could leave each parish as free to choose its ministers as its church-wardens? — or could repeal the Act of Uniformity, which deprives the clergyman of all power to vary the worship according to his own state of mind, or that of his parishioners? A people that have found a new shape for their Parliament will not believe their Church inflexible. The clergy, who apparently cannot distinguish between the permanence of objective truth and the mutability of representative forms and dogmas, will probably wait for the painful lessons of experience. But other classes, startled by the reappearance of doc-

Digitized by Google

trines worthy of the age of Laud, and discussions in the style of Peter Lombard, are meditating the question whether the Church is really fulfilling the understood conditions of an establishment. This question, as now entertained, goes much further, we are convinced, than it ever has before. It is not a mere doubt about patronage and the sale of presentations, though *that* is a thing odious to common sense and natural piety; it is not a scruple as to pluralities, though custom only can grow tolerant of the abuse; it is not an objection to the incomes of the bishops, though they *do* seem to detach the apostolic function from the apostolic lot; it is not a discontent with the monopoly of the Universities, galling as that is to the intellectual aspirations of dissent; it is not a pity for poor curates, or an aversion to ecclesiastical courts, but the far deeper question whether *that which the Church teaches* can truly be called the *religion of this nation*. Its theory of life, its picture of human nature and representations of the divine, its ideal of moral perfection, its demands on intellectual assent, — are they in agreement with the living faith, the noblest inspirations, the clearest knowledge, and the true heart-worship of the present English people! Or must it be said, that what is held true by the best informed rouses the frightened ecclesiastic instinct; that what the devoutest believe is not written in the creed; that what the purest and richest souls admire breathes through no appointed prayer; and that, in the real doubts and strife of their existence, men betake themselves to other thoughts than the curate's commonplace?

Digitized by Google

Recent events, we believe, have awakened thousands to the consciousness of an alarming interval between the dogmatic system of the Church and the living spirit of the time; and for one who refers this to the degeneracy of the age, there are a hundred who regard it as an antiquation of the Church. Unhappily, there is no simultaneous growth of confidence in any other denomination, and so the clergy, always debarred from ready access to doubting hearts, and seeing at present no swarm from their parish pews to the conventicle, are blind to the signs of the time. They will be the last to know how completely exceptional, among their hearers, is any genuine faith in the system of doctrine which they teach; — how many, with all the tastes and habits of conformity, are conscious of an active unbelief, and sigh after something of higher truth; — how many more rather suffer the service to pass before them, and graze the surface of their minds, than take it up as any expression of the depth and intensity of their nature. The patience of the English race, the endowments of the English Church, and the respectable character of the English clergy, only mask for a while the fact, conspicuous in the rest of Europe, that the Protestantism of the sixteenth century has worn itself out, and gives no adequate voice to the faith and piety of the present age. The very difficulty felt in dealing plainly with this subject, — the delicacy with which it is always handled, — the air of solemn respect with which public writers look at it, and pass by on the other side, — are evident indications that a blight of unreality has fallen on the

Digitized by Google

national theology. A faith truly breathing and pulsating in the soul *cannot* thus hold itself back in interior congestion, leaving the external form of contemporary thought stately as marble and impassive as death; but will flow into a thousand impressible varieties of natural language, and flush the frame and quicken the features with a free and flexible life. The reverence, the trust, the devout hope of a great people, can never fall into the artificial custody of a "religious public," or utter themselves only through the mouthpiece of a separate "profession." Doctrines which cannot be gravely mentioned without incurring the imputation of cant, — which are distasteful, not chiefly to the vain and careless, but yet more to the thoughtful and earnest, — which no educated man, unless he be in orders, can defend without loss to his reputation, or attack with any gain to it, — which leave scarce a trace on the fiction, the philosophy, the poetry of the time, and would be silenced but for special organs which they have created for themselves, — which openly despair of their own future, unless they can coerce the popular education, — have manifestly lost their living hold upon the minds of men, and are not fit to represent the religion of the extant generation. On this point we shall discard all conventional fastidiousness, and plainly state *where* we think the Church theory of human life stands in hopeless contradiction to the wants, the affections, and the henceforth ineradicable persuasions of the human soul.

All men instinctively feel that it is the office of religion to draw them upwards by helping the ten-

Digitized by Google

dencies of their purest veneration and their worthiest love, by embodying for them what they inwardly know to be holiest, and reminding them of what they feel to be best. The voice of prophet or of Saviour is ever a voice of sympathy and tenderness, — the sympathy, indeed, of a higher nature, the tenderness of a diviner sphere; still, however, addressing them, not as strangers to whom the idiom of heaven is like an unknown tongue, but as kindred in unwilling exile, on whose forgetful yet unalienated love the dear domestic tones will fall as a music of restoration. If it speaks of fears, it is of fears whose shadow is already on the heart; if it denounces guilt, it is a guilt that sits invisible as a nightmare on men's dreams. It goes, in short, direct down into their consciousness, and deals with them as with congenial beings gifted with a sacred insight which they neglect to use. It professes to deposit no sanctity, like an incrustation of security, upon them; but elicits it from them, like colors of a native beauty created by the touch of light. The Church theology makes no such appeal; talks to men, not of what they ought to know, but of what they cannot know; and makes its authority depend, not on its true interpretation of the oracles of living souls, but on the pedigree of manuscripts, the surmises of tradition, and the slippery chain of episcopal anointments. Its expounders assume a station outside the human, and profess (like the sophists) a wisdom beyond the apprehension of man, — *μείζω τινὰ ἢ κατ' ἄνθρωπον σοφίαν*,* — ex-

* Plat. Apol. Socr. 20. D.

Digitized by Google

pecting no sympathy from the answering heart, but demanding obedience from the submissive mind. In their mismanagement — as ever happens when prophecy is dead and priesthood lives — Christianity becomes *a threat;* "if you do not use our magic and believe our mysteries, 'without doubt you shall perish everlastingly.'" Nor is this the accidental feature of some one school of theology; it is a common character in the teachings of Tractarian and of Evangelical, who may quarrel about the means of grace, but can shake hands over the eternal wrath. From this the whole economy which they profess to administer is nothing but a contrivance for escape. This is the fundamental postulate from which the whole scheme is developed, which dictates all its language and gives meaning to all its forms. The charming away of this infinite curse is the very problem which the Church proposes to solve, and which is held to justify her existence. She is not there to make good citizens and good men, to give sanctity to the laws of obligation, and hope to sorrow and pure affection; but distinctly to wash out of them a physical poison, and save them from the tortures of an inexhaustible vengeance. And this tremendous end she refuses to accomplish, except on conditions, which the wisest may be unable to trust, and the most faithful may scruple to accept. For who can say that goodness may not doubt the sacraments which Clarkson and Elizabeth Fry disowned, and purity of heart reject the dogmas which Arnold and Channing never held? Either what the Church insists on as essential are *not* essentials, and her com-

Digitized by Google

mission to dispense them comes to naught, or some of the best of men and most saintly of women are among the damned. We question whether any one, professing such a faith as this, is to be believed upon his own word. He professes a psychological impossibility. No man, who would himself hesitate to put Channing on the wheel, and object to burn Mrs. Fry, feeling that his reluctance comes of a good heart, can believe that God will do these things on a scale more terrible.

It requires, indeed, no great insight into character to discover, that any reality in this eternal curse and penalty has for some time ceased. In proposing to rescue men from it, the Church makes an offer which no one cares to accept. Have our lay readers ever practically met with a person, — not under remorse for actual and heinous sin, — who wanted to be delivered from eternal torment? If ever a man does really apprehend such a thing for himself, and wring his hands and fix his eye in wild despair, how do we deal with him? Do we praise the clearness of his moral diagnosis and the logic of his orthodoxy? Do we refer him to the font for baptism, or the keys for absolution? No: we send him to the physician rather than the priest; we put cold sponges on his head, and bid his friends look after him. Nor does his doctrine any better bear application to the persons around us than to ourselves. If we sometimes act and speak by it, we never feel, and rarely think by it. Who ever knew a mother despair of her unbaptized and departed child? Let it only be considered *what* is the scene, what is the perspective,

Digitized by Google

before her imagination, if she be at once sound and sincere in the faith; and it must be owned that even her most passionate grief never rises to the pitch of such piercing shrieks as she would hurl into the place of unutterable agony. The whole conduct and demeanor of the very persons who defend this doctrine afford the clearest proof that it is incredible. The late Dr. Hamilton, of Leeds, wrote a book to prove that, beyond the little circle of choice believers, the universe is a vast torture chamber; and yet a merrier laugh, a more exuberant wit, a greater geniality, was rarely to be found. The professional hours of his life were spent, like those of some old painters, in coloring lurid pictures of his neighbors clutched by devils, and the world in general swallowing hot pitch; and for the rest of his time he was free to dine with the reprobates, and crack his jokes with the damned. No one, who seriously considers the intense inconsistency involved in such a life, can suppose that the theologian really held a faith which the grasp of a friendly hand and the welcome on a familiar face sufficed to dissipate. It is the same throughout the whole class of the sincerest and most faithful Christians. They delude themselves with the mere fancy and image of a belief. The death of a friend who departs from life in heresy affects them precisely in the same way as the loss of another whose creed was unimpeachable: while the theoretic difference is infinite, the practical is virtually nothing, — perhaps a sign of acquiescence in the clergyman's official compassion, or a faint desire that it had been otherwise; but not half the dis-

Digitized by Google

tress which had been felt when the same friend had broken his leg and lost his Pennsylvania dividends. What room, indeed, could there be for the business, the amusements, the contests of this world, if it reflected from every salient point the red light of so horrible a background? Who could spare any attention for the vicissitudes of cotton and the price of shares, for the merits of the last opera, and the bets upon the next election, if the actors in these things were really swinging in his eye over such a verge as he affects to see? We would ask any clergyman who reads the Athanasian Creed, How can you transact your daily affairs with any peace of mind? Your coat was made by a man who doubts the co-eternity; your grocer thinks the Holy Ghost created; you pay your rent to a landlord who confounds the persons; and your fishmonger divides the substance. If you found any of these with his house on fire, you would not think it a time for prosecuting your business; you see him in a greater peril, and you coolly inquire about sugars, or discuss the choice of salmon! The misfortune is, this doctrine is in some degree protected by its own monstrous character; which takes it so sheer out of all nature, that it can scarcely be confronted with reality. If we apply to it such tests of experience as would suffice in other cases, we produce results whose startling look distracts the attention from their logical consequentiality; and when we demand from men a life in simple accordance with their profession, the thing itself is so impossible that we are apt to seem unreasonable, and become charged with the very ex-

Digitized by Google

travagance which we impute. It is, however, notorious that a large number, even of the clergy, are fully *conscious* of their unbelief in this doctrine; and among the educated laity, the impression is general that no one, except here and there a dull curate or a pugnacious bishop, is sincere in his assent to it. Will it not, then, be got rid of? Not a bit: the instinct of ecclesiastical cohesion, and the passion for nominal unity, will outweigh all sense of human veracity and reverence for godly simplicity; and year after year, as sure as the Athanasian festivals come round, thousands of clergymen will solemnly profess, before tens of thousands of assenting people, a creed which is false to the heart of all. Depend upon it the State will wake up to a sense of right and dignity in this matter before the Church; and the honor of politicians grow sensitive to the blot, while yet the conscience of divines could bear a longer shame.

Now, we need not undertake to decide whether the age be perverse, or the doctrines be false. We only say that there is an irreconcilable variance between them, and that a Church which represents the one does not exhibit the religion of the other. It is not just, however, to affirm that the modern recoil from the stringent forms of the old orthodoxy is the result of a light and audacious spirit. On the contrary, it manifestly springs, in a large class of cases, from a profound moral earnestness. They who are deeply impressed with the problems of positive and personal sin are not likely to give much heed to the talk of a latent birth-sin; any more than, in the awful crisis of a fever, they would consult about the patient's

Digitized by Google

chance of hereditary gout. It is the reality of evil, the living sense of moral conflict, which makes faithful men impatient of charms against a bad lineage, instead of help against a strong temptation: what care they for the loins of their parents, while the battle runs high between the better and the worse in their own souls? Nay, paradoxical as the assertion may appear, this deeper feeling of inward strife, which marks the age, renders it not *more* possible, but much *less*, to say much more about the *corruption* of human nature. It has ceased to be a theory, scholastically looked at from the outside; or a sentimental formula, dropping from the lips of nursemaids jilted by their lovers, or squires robbed by their butlers. You must touch it with discrimination, for its meaning is known; and with its truth, the truth also of its opposite has been discovered. It is impossible for a man to find his ill but by the perception of good; to explore his darkness, but by an eye of pure vision and a lamp of holy light: he cannot loathe the wrong without aspiring to the right, nor combat with fiends without the instinct of an angel. His self-consciousness necessarily reveals to him both halves of his nature at once, and disgusts him henceforth with all one-sided doctrines,—whether the Church whines to him about human depravity, or Socinianism repeats its platitudes on human dignity. The feeling of the present age demands, we are convinced, an observance of this just equilibrium: the dogma must adapt itself to the fulness and refinement of modern experience, or pass away as the fiction of a world half passionate and half monastic.

Digitized by Google

The interpretation which thoughtful and devout Churchmen have long put on the established forms of theological expression must be accepted. By the constitutional *corruption* of man they commonly understand no more than the openness to evil which is inseparable from a free being, — δύναμις of sin as opposed to its ἐνέργεια, — together with that constant lagging of the halting will behind the winged desires which humbles us to seek the help of God. This is no stain which faith can cleanse, or hands, ordained to sprinkle, wash away; but an integrant part of our nature, — its peril and its glory, — without which we could serve under the bondage of no law, and win the freedom of no gospel. And a meaning far different from the historical definition of divines is currently given to the word *salvation*, — a word, however, which, after every softening, is not sincerely congenial with the highest religion of the time. Its direct opposition to *damnation* is very much lost; and, instead of denoting mere rescue from a penal doom, it is accepted as an expression for personal *union with God*, spiritual *perfectness of character*; or, without reference to any penal alternative, the simple *attainment of a blessed and immortal state*. These changes are the inevitable results of more humane and more trustful thought, trying to embody itself in forms selected by a sterner and a coarser time. Let the Church be reconciled to them, and adopt them. Though they change the logical basis of its theology, they preserve whatever can endure in its religion. Nothing is more dangerous to faith, more surely fatal in the end, than to press with

Digitized by Google

rigor the forms of dogma which have begun to bind and hurt the soul. Prove as you may that they would sit quite easy but for the perverse writhing and resistance within, the band has discovered itself to be unyielding, and from that instant it is the very function of life to take alarm, and either make it pliant or throw it off. It is as if you tried to argue back the alienated love of those who once were of one heart, but have diverged into uncongenial tastes and admirations. The more stringent your demonstration that they *ought* to feel as of old, the more impossible do you make it: your substantial failure is proportioned to your formal success. Religion, like poetry, is a life, a spirit, that must find its own forms by development from within, and cannot be moulded by external constriction; and the larger freedom you have courage to allow, the less will you have to regret irregularity and distortion; for it has inherently a tendency to order and beauty, only determined, not by authoritative mechanism, but by the rhythm and symmetry of the affections themselves.

Every devout era has been marked by a free enthusiasm, unconscious of reluctant beliefs, or boldly disengaging itself from them. From such a time the descent to an age of dogmatic construction is deep; to that of dogmatic reconstruction, is final. From the period of St. Paul to that of Eusebius, what an infinite declension in every thing that should be dear to Christian man! In both, diversity of theology abounded; nor in intellectual conception of the objects of faith did the rival creeds of subsequent

Digitized by Google

times stand in stronger contrast than the Judaic and Gentile Christianities, the doctrines of faith and works, the Logos and the Son-of-David theories of the Messiah, the Palestinian demonology and Alexandrine spiritualism, which lie harmoniously together within the compass of the New Testament itself. No greater difference separated Jerome and Rufinus, Theophilus and Chrysostom, Augustine and Pelagius, than is found between the theocratic doctrine of Mark's Gospel and the mystic depth of John's; or between James, the apostle of ethics, and St. Paul, the champion of faith. But the first age was inspired with intense affections; the other was withered up with dry contentions. In the one, Christianity was a breathing faith; in the other, a dialectic exercise. The one had a creative soul, the other a critical understanding; and while the former, rich in various populations, out of its differences produced unconscious theologies, the latter out of its theologies produced only conscious differences. Divisions without end, and passions without check, have been the invariable result of ecclesiastic legislation for unity and peace. It brings with it strong delusion and a corrupting poison into the clerical mind; bewildering its perception of the proportions of things, and confounding the solemn and the frivolous; where mystery is deepest, raising highest the conceit of knowledge; where forbearance is most due, removing all restraints from anger; where penalty can least avail, applying it with cruellest force; substituting the pleader's arts for the disciple's simplicity, and the sophist's pride for the saint's meekness.

Digitized by Google

The organization of dogma is symptomatic of the dissolution of faith; it is an unwholesome mushroom growth from the rotting leaves now fallen from the tree of life. That blessed foliage feeds it, no doubt; only not from the vital sap, but from the juices of decay. It is bad enough that the Church should have inherited her chief formulas of belief from such an age and such a reign as that of Constantine; a reign hideous with guilt; an age so surrendered to depraved morals and misdirected intellect, that, if ever there could be in Christendom an incapacity for discerning spiritual truth, it must have been then. But to make such a time the rule for all others, — to dignify by the name of "the Catholic faith" the propositions which emerged from its wranglings, by outvoting or outreaching the rest; to scorn, in comparison, the light of recent thought, and constrain the modern Englishman to put back the index of his Christian consciousness to the hour when Athanasius triumphed, — is a weak rebellion against providential tendencies, and an irreligious scepticism of God's perpetual inspiration. If, by a liberal interpretation, or, better, a complete revision of the technical phraseology of doctrine, the bands of creed be not relaxed, the Church must either descend to the rank of a sect, or become a vast hypocrisy; pretending to unity, yet torn by divisions; representing the faith of the country, yet sheltering its unbelief; the symbol of piety, yet a storehouse of unveracity; the nominal head of all our culture, yet sworn to the words of an age that had none of it. How long will educated Englishmen bear patiently the injurious decree of eccle-

Digitized by Google

siastics? "You shall not be religious, except on conditions impossible to the understanding!" It is notorious that the present time is prolific beyond all that have preceded it in honest varieties of devout belief; and for a Church pretending to the affections of such a time, and comprising among her honored names Sewell and Milman, Hare and Close, to insist upon the inflexible standard of doctrine, presents a singular aspect of infatuation and insincerity.

The prevalent alienation from the stereotyped system of Church dogma is by no means confined, we believe, to the points on which we have touched. Men, we have said, do not want to be "saved" from an "eternal torment" which has no hold upon their faith; or to escape, by ritual exorcism, a congenital curse which frightens them no more. They do, however, want to be helped into a conscious peace with God, and a pure fidelity of life. Much as we hear from divines of the pride and self-righteousness which oppose the reception of their doctrines, and freely as we admit the operation of moral causes like these on the aptitudes for faith, we deny the general applicability of this imputation; and are prepared to vindicate the humility and devoutness of a large and increasing class of doubting and dissatisfied Churchmen. They are not less sensible than others of the delusions of heart and decrepitude of will, by which they fall away from the life to which they aspire, and in which alone they can be in harmony with God; and they have no higher wish than to find a mediator of this contradiction, and rise into the freedom of reconciled affections. But the mechanism

Digitized by Google

provided for this end, in the dogmas of the Church, has lost its efficacy upon all the higher class of minds, and wields no longer any worthy power over the lower. The forensic scheme of vicarious atonement is too probably at variance with the habitual moral sentiments of men, to command the old reverential assent; too manifestly conceived in the artificial style of legal fiction, to suit a people ever eager to ground themselves on some veracious reality. It is useless for the preacher to treat the repugnance of reason and affection to this doctrine, as the sign of a graceless heart. His hearers know better, and are fully conscious that the protest comes not from their lower passions, but from their highest discernment; from indignation that the dealings of the Infinite should be described in the language of debtor and creditor, and the universe, as the theatre of responsible existence, be degraded into the likeness of a bankruptcy court. They feel, moreover, that to accept the offer of such a doctrine would be unworthy of a noble heart; for he who would not rather be damned than escape through the sufferings of innocence and sanctity is so far from the qualifications of a saint, that he has not even the magnanimity of Milton's fiends. We are spared, however, the necessity of stating the objections which we know to be widely felt to this doctrine, as it appears in the Church formulas; for the following remarks, by an orthodox clergyman, present them with a force and clearness that leave nothing to be desired. The writer divides the views prevalent upon this subject into two classes: the first representing the death of Christ as a *literal*

Digitized by Google

substitution of evil endured, for evil that else would have to be endured; the other holding it as an *expression* of abhorrence to sin, made through the sufferings of one, in place of the same expression that was to be made by the suffering of many. In reference to the former class of representations he says: —

"We may say, comprehensively, that they are capable, one and all, of no light in which they do not even offend some right moral sentiment of our being. Indeed, they raise up moral objections with such marvellous fecundity, that we can hardly state them as fast as they occur to us.

"Thus, if evil remitted must be repaid by an equivalent, what real economy is there in the transaction? What is effected save the transfer of penal evil from the guilty to the innocent? And if the great Redeemer, in the excess of his goodness, consents, freely offers himself to the Father, or to God, to receive the penal woes of the world in his own person, what does it signify, when that offer is accepted, but that God will have his modicum of suffering somehow, if he lets the guilty go, — will yet satisfy himself out of the innocent? In which the divine government, instead of clearing itself, assumes the double ignominy, first, of letting the guilty go, and secondly, of accepting the sufferings of innocence! In which Calvin, seeing no difficulty, is still able to say, when arguing for Christ's three days in hell, 'it was requisite that he should feel the severity of the divine vengeance, in order to appease the wrath of God, and satisfy his justice.' I confess my inability to read this kind of language without a sensation of horror; for it is not the half-poetic, popular language of Scripture, but the cool, speculative language of theory, as concerned with the reason of God's penal distributions.

Digitized by Google

"And yet this objection is aggravated, if possible, by another representation, that Christ did not suffer willingly, or by consent, save in the sense that he obeyed the command by which it was laid upon him to suffer. Thus, a distinguished American writer, in his treatise on this subject, written only thirty years ago, says, 'The Father must command him to die, or the stroke would not be from his own hand,' carrying still the analogy of punishment so far as to suppose that, like all penal inflictions, Christ must die under 'authority' of God, in order that his death should have any theologic value. It is of no moment to ask, in this connection, what becomes of the deity of the Son, when he is thus under the authority of the Father; for he is not merely under it, as being in the flesh, as the Scriptures speak, but it is 'authority' that sends him into the flesh. To profess the real and proper deity of Christ, in such a connection, is only to use words as instruments of self-deception. His deity, after all, is not believed, and cannot be where such a doctrine is held.

"Again, it is a fatal objection to this view, that it sets every transgressor right before the law, when, as yet, there is nothing right in his character; producing, if we view it constructively, and not historically (for historic and speculative results do not always agree), the worst conceivable form of licentiousness. For if the terms of the law are satisfied, the transgressor has it for his right to go free, whether he forsake his transgressions or not. As far as any mere claims of law or justice are concerned, he may challenge impunity for all the wrongs he has committed, shall commit, or can commit while his breath remains!" *

* God in Christ. Three Discourses, delivered at New Haven, Cambridge, and Andover, with a Preliminary Dissertation on Language. By Horace Bushnell. (Hartford, Connecticut, 1849.) p. 195.

Digitized by Google

In such trenchant manner does a Presbyterian divine, in a book written to defend the Trinitarian theology, deal with the favorite Evangelical topic. We do not profess, with our Bœotian apprehension of dogmatic subtilties, to perceive the essential distinction between the opinion thus criticized and what he calls "the second and more mitigated class of orthodox opinions," namely, those which make the efficacy of Christ's death consist, not in what it *is*, but in what it *expresses*. Between a substituted "punishment," and a substituted "expression of abhorrence for sin," we can find nothing but a verbal difference; seeing that only by being punishment would it express any thing against sin, or replace as a substitute, with equivalent functions, the great penal scene of the universe. We suppose, however, that a practised theological vision can detect some valid distinction where it evades the ordinary eyesight. Dr. Bushnell, while paying a higher respect to the second hypothesis, visits it, notwithstanding, with the following decisive judgment: —

"This latter seems to accord with the former view, in supposing that Christ suffers evil as evil, or as a penal visitation of God's justice, only doing it in a less painful degree; that is, suffering so much of evil as will suffice, considering the dignity of his person, to express the same amount of abhorrence to sin that would be expressed by the eternal punishment of all mankind. I confess my inability to see how an innocent being could ever be set, even for one moment, in an attitude of displeasure under God. If He could lay his frown for one moment on the soul of innocence and virtue, He must be no such being as I have loved

Digitized by Google

and worshipped. Much less can I imagine that He should lay it on the head of one whose nature is itself coequal Deity. Does any one say that He will do it for public governmental reasons? No governmental reasons, I answer, can justify even the admission of innocence into a participation of frowns and penal distributions. If consenting innocence says, 'Let the blow fall on me,' precisely there is it for a government to prove its justice, even to the point of sublimity; to reveal the essential, eternal, unmitigable distinction it holds between innocence and sin, by declaring that, as under law and its distributions, it is even impossible to suffer any commutation, any the least confusion of places.

"All the analogies invented or brought from actual history to clear the point are manifestly worthless. If Zaleucus, for example, instead of enforcing the statute against his son which required the destruction of both his eyes, thinks to satisfy the law by putting out one of his own eyes and one of his son's, he only practises a very unintelligent fraud upon the law, under pretext of a conscientiously literal enforcement of it. The statute did not require the loss of two eyes; if it had, the two eyes of a dog would have sufficed; but it required *the* two eyes of a criminal, — that he, as a wrongdoer, should be put into darkness. If the father had consented to have both his own eyes put out instead of his son's, it might have been very kind of him; but to speak of it as public justice, or as any proper vindication of law, would be impossible. The real truth signified would be, that Zaleucus loved public justice too little, in comparison with his exceeding fondness for his son, to let the law have its course; and yet, as if the law stood upon getting two eyes, apart from all justice, had too many scruples to release the sin, without losing the two eyes of the body, as before he had lost the eyes of his reason.

Digitized by Google

"According to the supposition, the problem here is to produce an expression of abhorrence to sin, through the sufferings of Christ, in place of another, through the sufferings of the guilty. Now the truth of the latter expression consists in the fact, that there is an abhorrence in God to be expressed. But there is no such abhorrence in God towards Christ; and therefore, if the external expression of Christ's sufferings has no correspondent feeling to be expressed, where lies the truth of the expression? And if the frown of God lies upon his soul, as we often hear, in the garden and on the cross, how can the frown of God, falling on the soul of innocence, express any truth or any feeling of justice?"*

After such a verdict as this, pronounced by an orthodox divine, distinguished alike by genius and moderation, who can wonder at the aversion with which noble and cultivated minds recoil from the so-called "economy of salvation"? Of the feeling which its technical phraseology produces, the acute and refined Tractarian leaders are well aware; and one of their earliest aims was to withdraw this doctrine from open publication, under pretence that it was too sacred a mystery to be more than whispered in the sanctuary. If it was obtruded upon unprepared minds, it was said, it might be extremely dangerous; for the secret treasures of God were not always to be shown; a vain display of them before the eye of the unregenerate might have serious consequences; all holy things, in proportion as they were springs of life to the faithful, were of awful

* See "Tracts for the Times," Nos. 80 and 87, especially Part V. sec. 3.

Digitized by Google

peril to the unprepared. Better would it be if the "stewards of the mysteries" would reserve this truth deeply in the shade, and adopt respecting it the "*disciplina arcani.*" What could be more *covert* than our Lord's own dealing with it? Is it not a *latent* presence in his teachings, never prominently and explicitly declared? And it is ever most effectually impressed on others by silent implication, and the "instruction of a penitent and merciful demeanor," rather than by being "proclaimed, as it were, in the market-place," and opened to all indiscriminately.* Now, let it be remembered whence this curious pleading comes; and that all the writings of its class must be read shrewdly, like a paper from the foreign office; for the Tractarians, as God's ambassadors at the court of Human Nature, have introduced a most diplomatic spirit into the divinity propounded there: let this be remembered, and the real motive for converting the warmth of the atonement doctrine into a latent heat will not be far to seek, Left to radiate at large, it produced a shrinking of the mind, a withering sense of blight to the moral sentiments, which endangered the whole Church scheme; and if any lofty and tender souls were to be retained in allegiance to it at all, this dogma must be taken out of the mouth of popular declaimers, thrown back into secrecy, and committed to sacraments of solemn look and silent form.

In rebuking this Jesuitry, the Evangelical clergy have certainly all the honesty on their side. But in

* Bushnell, p. 199.

Digitized by Google

practising it, the Tractarians rightly interpret, we believe, the alienated feelings of a class of men, without whose sympathy and convictions no Church can remain rational, no theology respectable, and no religion above the taint of gross superstition. There is no way, however, of preserving or of recovering their sympathy, or any sympathy by which religion can profit, but by perfect simplicity and truth. No management, no suppression, can serve the end; the guilt and discredit of artifice are spent only in the purchase of failure. It is not by manœuvring people back into persuasions from which they have in heart emerged, but by urging the Church forward, to comprehend and interpret their ennobled affections, that the forfeited harmony can be restored. The shadow on the dial of history cannot be coaxed back. Lost positions in the movements of the human mind are never recovered, and in the oscillations of faith no reaction ever touches the old points and reproduces the same attitudes of thought. The same subjective tendency may undoubtedly recur after long sleep, but it finds a new set of objective conditions forbidding the re-creation of the past; as a south wind that has blown in spring may set in again with the late summer; but, as it falls on a different season, it will open a fresh set of flowers. No doubt the recoil from the Protestant integration of Churches has impressed upon the present age a Catholic aspiration; an admiration for the unity which we have lost. But this feeling is simply insulted by offering to its imitation the mediæval Romanism. Aspiration cannot imitate; it must cre-

Digitized by Google

ate; and whatever unity may yet arise in Christendom will be no less different from any thing we have yet known than the factory from the monastery, the locomotive from the packhorse, or the Times newspaper from the illuminated manuscript. Above all, fellowship must be sought, not by exclusion, but by inclusion; not by enforcement of dogma, but by sympathy of spirit; not by suppression of individuality, but by development of it, till its contrarieties drop away, and it yields up Catholicity of faith as a product of unity of nature. The "bond of the spirit" sufficed, without metaphysical definitions, for the disciples in the age of the Apostles; and every Church which fears to trust its guidance is self-convicted of being non-apostolic.

Perhaps the most positive divergence of the age from the Church is to be traced in their irreconcilable notions of what is best in human character. Their admirations are not simply different, but opposite. The life which appears noble and great to the mechanic, the merchant, the statesman, is unholy in sacerdotal eyes; the heroes of modern fiction and biography are unconsecrate according to the measure of theology; and against that which the newspaper praises the sermon lifts its voice. Nor is this discordance at all concurrent with the old quarrel between "flesh and spirit"; the low, self-seeking desires, and the reverent faithfulness of the human heart. It is an honest and an earnest difference in the moral tastes and standard of the devout ecclesiastic and the devout layman. If a Massillon or a Barrow denounced from the pulpit the corrup-

Digitized by Google

tions of his age, the rake and the hypocrite who listened were either pricked in conscience at his words, or else aware of being too far gone for scruple and contrition. But the modern invectives against the world and its ways carry with them no piercing reproach; the state of mind extolled as spiritual is felt to be only ecclesiastical: it kindles no affection, rouses no sacred ambition; at best, it is only looked at from without as a quaint old picture, romantic to see on the dead wall of time, and no man is eager to present himself in its likeness on the Exchange or St. Stephen's. We have reached a time when the broad chasm between the Church and the world cannot be kept open; and we must have something to mediate between the natural conscience and the Christian life. The theory which entirely removes Christianity from contact and sympathy with the common springs of human action and movements of human affection, — which treats it as a hypernatural grace superinduced from without, — necessarily creates a type of unnatural and unmoral goodness, incapable of being sustained in the permanent admiration of mankind; and then the Church, while abandoning in despair, as a piece of doomed corruption, the real and living nature which to a pure culture would yield the noblest fruits, fails to impart any better inspiration.

Whoever persuades himself that, in the awards of another world, there are to be two grand classes, separated by all that can render contrast terrible, and that already, as they walk the streets, men bear upon them the sealing grace or the cursing brand,

Digitized by Google

will not be content to see them look so like each other. He will ignore the visible lights and shades of genuine character, to dwell upon mystic and viewless distinctions. Religion is not equivalent with him to a pure mind and an harmonious character, and may even tend to distort the conscience and misapply the energy of the will. It sets itself up, apart from morals, as a separate business, involving a distinct series of acts, and rather eclipsing all finite relations than glorifying them to infinitude. The heavenly frame of soul which must be sought is not simply the best and highest spirit applicable to the worldly work of the hour, but something above all worldly work; something that feels the very contact of such affairs as a mean distraction, and that aims to sit aloof from them in higher contemplations. The one thing needful in its estimate is, to keep up in the mind, in a state of vivid excitement, a certain limited set of thoughts and emotions, which are taken as signs of communion with the Spirit. The great business of life is to perpetuate, not the unconscious influence, but the conscious presence, of these sentiments; whatever suffers, they must be watched, preserved, stimulated to greater intensity; every thing is valued solely by its tendency to suggest these ideas, or to burnish them again when they have become dull within the heart. This is adopted as the test of right and wrong; and the most injudicious efforts of zeal are approved, if they do but deepen the essential sentiments: while no employment of the understanding can be so noble, no sympathy so pure, no pleasure so innocent, no duty so worthy of

Digitized by Google

our humanity, as to escape condemnation, if it tend to withdraw the mind from its prescribed meditations, and melt its rigid catalepsy of thought. Hence the first place in the rank of obligations is given to acts of devotion; and the devotee lives that he may learn to pray, instead of praying that he may learn to live. The excitement of the Church becomes more welcome than the drudgery of the home; a higher relish is found in a transport than in a duty; the simple pleasure, the unpretending moralities, the secular utilities of life, let down the mind to a pitch too low for saintship; and those who cannot always be strung up to the spiritual point, but who are careful to do the duty that lies nearest to them; those who, by the spontaneity of a pure conscience, do good without a thought of self, and give the cup of cold water, not in order to be divinely meek, but in order to assuage a human suffering; those who refresh family and neighbors by the perennial flow of delicious sympathies, without knowing that they have any themselves, — encounter the contempt of these peculiar people of God. Detaching religion from morality, they concentrate their whole anxiety on the performance of acts having exclusive reference to God, and an abstinence from others which have no further guilt than that of preoccupying the mind, which is to be left vacant as his temple.

In the highest minds religion has no separate duties of its own, but is the spirit which should impregnate all duty: it changes the direction of no obligation, but gives intensity to the force of all: it has no rivalry with any pure affection, but befriends and

Digitized by Google

consecrates them all. Under its influence, therefore, life is not essentially changed in character, but simply hopes more, loves more, aspires more. This view alone can save religion from degenerating into morbidness and superstition; but it arranges men too much by the natural groupings of character, and melts away too completely the great eternal classification, to suit the priesthood intrusted with the power of the keys. The Church is committed to a Manichean theory of the phenomena of life, and binds herself to detect in it only the struggle of extreme and absolutely hostile principles. Total spiritual night, and supernatural illumination, divide this scene of things between them; and to give some semblance of probability to this, a badge-morality must be set up, that it may be clear who 's who. The notion that they are living in a lost world visibly influences the moral judgments of divines. They are *bound* to find "the world" guilty, and see it under an aspect of indiscriminate condemnation. Hence amusements, occupations, habits, beliefs, are condemned, not for their intrinsic demerits, but simply because they are favorites with a class prejudged as unconverted. What these children of perdition do, the heirs of grace make a point of avoiding; and where the worldly go, the holy stay away; or if they happen to meet in any scene which the former enjoy, the latter will be found to be groaning in spirit. Contrast and distinction thus become prime essentials with those who fancy themselves secretly marked out from the sinful herd with whom their lot is thrown; and were there no world to inveigh

Digitized by Google

against and shun, one half the rules by which they speak and live would disappear.

This contrast of character between the world and the Church has not always, we confess, been as unreal as it has now become. Usurping a place in Christianity among the theocratic ideas which corrupted the religion almost from the first, it operated largely on history, and tended to realize itself. Under certain conditions, moreover, society inclines, by natural law, to part into extremes. The ideal of Christian perfection, once given to the mind, could not live in the close presence of a universal corruption of morals, such as spread over the Roman empire in its decline; and to fly from such a world seemed the sole resource for those who would be faithful to the vows and hopes of their discipleship. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the whole aspect of Europe supported, by its opposite coloring, the theory of a secular and a spiritual race coexisting on this earth. The face of every country was dotted over with castles as the symbols of the one, and abbeys as the other; and on the roads, the helm and sword, or the cowl and staff, showed at once the traveller's class. Nor, with all the vices of the monastic system, was the external and assumed distinction entirely deceptive. One difference of character, at all events, never failed; the world was a camp, the abbey a sanctuary; the one contested at all points by men of war, the other occupied by disciples of the Prince of Peace. But besides this, the state of manners among the nobles and gentry, the cruelties and treachery which marked their feuds,

Digitized by Google

the oppression with which they treated their serfs, the riot and excess which disgraced their dwellings, turned many a province into a plausible likeness to some devil's realm, and rendered it scarce habitable by any but rude and untamed spirits. And so the gentle and devout were driven, by the mere repulsion of such a scene, to take the vows of poverty and celibacy. Though weakness and incapacity also were forced, by greedy relatives, into the cloister; and though the retreat inevitably degenerated often into a hiding-place of idleness and hypocrisy; yet whatever divine enthusiasm seized anywhere upon the souls of men sought a refuge there; whatever declension might afterwards creep on, at least the moment of entrance was warm with the fresh fervor of devotion: and *that* was the moment when the eye of spectators, bidding adieu to the young devotee, caught the contrasted glimpse of the world and the Church. Time after time, the convent door seemed to close behind some soul purely consecrate to Christ. In that age, therefore, there was little to contradict the Church classification: as in heaven, so on earth, were the spheres of character distinct; and to the opposite directions were qualities truly opposite attracted. When all the business and enterprise of life was of a kind that a pious Christian could not touch, it was excusable in him to fly, and, in the absence of all worthy scope for human faculty, make a business of religion.

But what can be more preposterous than to exhibit this type of mind as a model for the emulation of the present age? — as if we had no more natural

Digitized by Google

gymnastics for the character than were furnished in the objectless life of the monk; no temptations without meeting with devils in a wood; no self-denials without pricking our waists with sharp chain-belts, or mimicking with piercing hats the crown of thorns! Yet, to reawaken the English admiration for this ascetic discipline, the "Lives of the Saints" are avowedly written; to induce converted bankers to quit Lombard Street for a life of contemplation, to incline cotton-spinners to recite the Psalter every day, and bring Sir Robert Peel down to the house in a hair shirt.

These books are to us in the highest degree melancholy; not the less so for their singular beauty and fascination. Their subtle grace of form and style, their frequent depth and delicacy of expression, are the fair disguise of a fatal unsoundness; their brilliant and romantic coloring is but the sad hectic of the spirit. Their whole aim is to recommend, not *self-devotion* to high ends, but a species of *suicide* for Christ's sake; the quenching of passion, the abrogation of intellect, and the plucking up of the fairest human affections, to be trampled on as weeds. The intensest forces of the soul are to be spent in nothing else than in crushing themselves; and when beauty has made itself hideous, and eloquence learned to stammer, and acuteness blunted its edge against holy contradictions, and creative genius brought itself to do nothing, and he who might rule an empire sweeps a drain, — then is the sacrifice complete, and the whole nature thus ruined is said to be dedicate to God. As if He were a great devouring abyss of

Digitized by Google

annihilation, demanding to be fed by the everlasting consumption of whatever is lovely and glorious; and stationing men here only to watch every grace and power as it emerged into life, and instantly pitch it back again into death.

In no instance is the extravagance of this doctrine more strikingly presented than in the sketch of St. Bernard, contained in the Life of St. Stephen, Abbot of Citeaux. This poor monastery, the birthplace of the Cistercian order, was distinguished by its severity of discipline. For fourteen years it had existed without drawing to it any new inmates to replace the original fraternity as death thinned their numbers; and already the life of unprofitable pain, and an atmosphere of wood and swamp, had made great havoc with the little band. Amid these discouragements, however, the lonely place was one day startled by the knocking at the gate of thirty men, who applied in a body for admission as novices. This group, composed of men from the noblest houses of Burgundy, was gathered around the person and under the lead of the young and high-born Bernard. The saint's graces of countenance and soul, the sweetness of his eloquence, the quickness of his intellect, are described by the author with the fervor of a manifest sympathy. The enthusiasm of the youth was not content with the sacrifice of himself; but he set himself to drag all his relations with him into the cloister. And he succeeded. Genius, kindled by the consciousness of high resolve, has vast power; and Bernard combined, in utmost perfection, all the qualities before which lower minds,

Digitized by Google

in spite of their rude stubbornness of will, are found to bend and yield; like iron that resists an outer pressure, but grows pliant with inner heat. His burning words and indomitable zeal carried off into monastic captivity his five brothers, who left their old father "to sit alone in his deserted halls with his daughter Humbeline," "a barren trunk, with the choice boughs lopped off"; besides an uncle and many friends, torn not from estates and possessions merely, but often from their wives, whom Bernard persuaded or terrified into consent and the widowhood of a nunnery. Our biographer does not shrink from the protest which affection and conscience utter against this frightful fanaticism. Whether his replies are satisfactory to faith, we cannot presume to say; but assuredly they are not convincing to reason; indeed, so fine and feminine are they, that they can be called answers only by a species of logical gallantry.

"Now, it may be asked, that Stephen has housed his thirty novices, what has he or any one else gained by it? — what equivalent is gained for all these ties rudely rent, — for all these bleeding hearts torn asunder, and carrying their wounds unhealed into the cloister? Would not rustics suit Stephen's case well, if he would cultivate a marsh in an old wood, without desolating the hearths of the noblest houses in Burgundy? Human feeling revolts, when high nobles, with their steel helmets, shining hauberks, and painted surcoats, are levelled with the commonest tillers of the soil; and even feelings of pity arise when high-born dames, clad in minever and blazing with jewels, cast all aside for the rough sackcloth and the poor serge of St. Benedict. What shall we say when young mothers quit their husbands and their families, to bury themselves in a clois-

Digitized by Google

ter? There are here no painted windows and golden candlesticks, with chasubles of white and gold to help out the illusion; feeling and imagination, all are shocked alike, and every faculty of the natural man is jarred at once at the thought. Such words might have been spoken even in Stephen's time, but 'wisdom is justified of her children.' One word suffices to silence all these murmurers; *Ecce homo*, — Behold the man! The wonders of the incarnation are an answer to all cavils. Why, it may as well be asked, did our blessed Lord choose to be a poor man, instead of being clothed in purple and fine linen? — why was His mother a poor virgin? — why was He born in an inn, and laid in a manger? — why did He leave his blessed mother, and almost repulse her, when she would speak to Him? — why was that mother's soul pierced with agony at the sufferings of her divine Son? — why, when one drop of His precious blood would have healed the whole creation, did He pour it all out for us? — in a word, why, when He might have died (if it be not wrong to say so) what the world calls a glorious death, did He choose out the most shameful, besides heaping to Himself every form of insult, and pain of body and soul? He did all this to show us that suffering was now to be the natural state of the new man, just as pleasure is the natural state of the old. Suffering and humiliation are the proper weapons of the Christian, precisely in the same way that independence, unbounded dominion and power, are the instruments of the greatness of the world. No one can see how all this acts to bring about the final triumph of good over evil; it requires faith, but so does the spectacle of our blessed Lord naked on the cross, with St. Mary and St. John weeping on each side. After casting our eyes on the holy rood, does it never occur to us to wonder how it can be possible to be saved in the midst of the endearments of a family and the joys of do-

Digitized by Google

mestic life? God forbid that any one should deny the possibility! — but does it not at first sight require proof, that heaven can be won by a life spent in this quiet way? Again, let us consider the dreadful nature of sin, even of what are called the least sins, and would not any one wish to cast in his lot with Stephen, and wash them away by continual penance? Now, if what has been said is not enough to reconcile the reader's mind to their leaving their father in a body, which looks like quitting a positive duty, it should be considered that they believed themselves to be acting under the special direction of God. Miracles were really wrought to beckon them on; at least, they were firmly convinced of the truth of those miracles, which is enough for our purpose; and they would have disobeyed what they considered to be God's guidance, if they had remained in the world. Miracles, indeed, cannot be pleaded to the reversing of commands of the Decalogue; but persons leave their parents for causes which do not involve religion at all, as to follow some profession in a distant quarter of the globe, or to marry; and we may surely excuse St. Bernard and his brothers for conduct which was so amply justified by the event. One word more: every one will allow that he who is continually meditating on heaven and heavenly things, and ever has his conversation in heaven, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, is more perfect than he who is always thinking on worldly affairs. Let no one say that this perfection is ideal, for it is a mere fact that it has been attained. Stephen and Bernard, and ten thousand other saints, have won this perfection, and it may be it is won now, for the Church verily is not dead, nor have the gates of hell prevailed against her. All cannot attain to such a high state on earth, for it is not the vocation of all. It was, however, plainly God's will, that all Bernard's convertites should be so called, from the fact of their having attained

Digitized by Google

to that state of perfection. They were happy, for to them it was given not to fear those words of our Lord, 'Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me'; or again, that saying, spoken to one who asked to go and bury his father, 'Let the dead bury the dead.' Moreover, they knew that blessing, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.' Bernard did receive back both father and sister, for his father died in his arms a monk at Clairvaux, and his sister also in time retired to a cloister. Let any one read St. Bernard's sermons on the Song of Solomon, and he will not doubt that monks have joys of their own, which none but those who have felt them can comprehend." — pp. 113 – 115.

To unravel the complex web of this dialetic is the less needful, because it is, in its very nature, of that delicate kind that no mind can be held entangled in it, except by spontaneously resting beneath it, pleased with the feel of it on the surface of thought. Besides, who can untwine the windings of a gossamer, thrown with its dewdrops on his reason? It breaks in the attempt; and, to be rid of it, the only way is to wipe it off. As to the argument, however, from the incarnation, which is to be good against all cavils, we would ask, — Is it then true that the Redeemer might have saved the world at much less cost? — and was a portion of his suffering absolutely gratuitous? — can his example be quoted in favor of the assumption of pain for its own sake? We

Digitized by Google

had always thought that, "when he was rich," it was "*for our sakes* that he became poor"; and if *any* of his privations were unrelated to an end, why not *all?*

Again, it is an abuse of all reasonable doctrine of self-denial, to pronounce that "suffering and humiliation" are the *proper weapons* of the Christian, just as independence, dominion, and power. "Suffering and humiliation" are mere negations, productive of nothing, conquering nothing in and by themselves: they do not stand related to the ends of the Christian life as power to the ends of the worldly life; for power achieves its purposes, whatever be the quality of the will that guides it; but suffering achieves nothing, apart from the spirit that bows under it and interprets it: else might a man be saved by a toothache or a bankruptcy. It is easy to see the source whence this exaggeration springs. The genuine moral service laid upon us in this world cannot be accomplished without the endurance of hardship and privation; and he who cannot dispense with his ease and indulgences, and go fasting long months or years without the taste of them, is no faithful vassal of the Divine Power that rules him. There is danger lest he shrink from the post of allotted trial, and the spectacle of privation drive him back from his fidelity. This danger must be provided against by devotedness and resolve; suffering must be so vanquished as to be *no hinderance*, and impose *no limits* to the perseverance of high affections. But a positive help, an efficacious instrument, of noble purposes, it cannot be; for what

Digitized by Google

moral, what spiritual character, can there be in tortured nerves or a lacerated skin? What sanctity in having the body brought low,—for does not the spent voluptuary, as well as the fasting saint, accomplish that? Suffering and humiliation are indeed *conditions*, under which a good man must be willing that his moral purposes and vows shall act without abatement or recoil; but in those purposes, with the sustaining help of Heaven, lie his power; there alone is the armory whence he draws the "weapons" of his conquest. No doubt, the apparition of a sudden difficulty, the threat of a great peril, nay, even the tension of some terrible anguish, will condense, as it were, the energies of a strong soul, and bring them to a pitch of sublimity impossible to mere volition: but only on this condition, that the suffering be involuntary, starting up as a resistance to be hurled away, not sought as an end to be retained. At once to court and to repel resistance involves a self-neutralizing action of the soul, inconsistent alike with its force and its repose.

It remains to be proved, says our author, with evident inclination to the negative, whether a married man or woman can be saved! Is the doubt serious? What a cheerful prospect must his faith open to him in the future;—not even—as we had thought—Abraham and Isaac and Jacob;—but, in the absence of family groups, anchorites and cenobites, priests and nuns! It is unfortunate for the celibate successors of St. Peter that *he* was a married man; and curious, that St. Paul, the Apostle of the Protestants, preferred to remain unmarried. Nothing can more

Digitized by Google

clearly prove, than this query about matrimonial salvation, the slavish worship of pain which is taking possession of a large class of ecclesiastics in the present day. Sickened with the prating about happiness and interest among moralists of the last generation, they do not perceive that this wretched idol, like all others, may be worshipped in two ways, — as a god, or as a devil; by adoration, or by deprecation; with the worship of love, or the worship of fear. The ascetic is unconsciously a votary of the very same false deity as the epicurean; only shrinking from him in terror, instead of approaching him with hope; getting into his power through antipathy instead of sympathy; and visiting his approaches with exorcism rather than with prayers. In the eye of truth, however, an idol is neither god nor devil, but just nothing in the world. And so this foolish happiness — much stroked and much beaten image, carved out of the stock of a wooden philosophy — is nothing to the essence of human duty at all. Neither positively nor privately does obligation lie in the feeling flesh or in the sensitive spirit: the sensibilities can give no sanctities, and take none away: but simply stand by as a neutral presence, that is neither to invite nor to deter. Other scales than any they can give — scales not of measured intensity, but of divine quality — have authority to determine the ends and provide for the holiness of life.

It is perhaps a very shocking confession, but we shall nevertheless avow our doubt, whether "he who is continually meditating on heaven *is* more perfect than he who is always thinking on worldly affairs."

Digitized by Google

"Continually meditating" on any thing whatsoever we should regard as a state so little perfect, that the question of more or less, according to the object that might engage so mutilated a soul, is without practical value. But as the sustained contemplation of "heavenly things" seems to preclude, while the attention to "worldly things demands," the descent of the will into action, and some wholesome strife for the moral powers, we submit that the last is so far higher than the first. If by "worldly things" we are to think only of objects intrinsically evil, and to suppose the man planning how to cheat his creditors, or wreak his revenge, or pamper his appetites, — the question begs its own answer, and any celestial quietism is better than that. But if the parallel be drawn between a mind floating in spiritual space, and a soul accepting, like a good athlete, the conditions of its battle here, and animating the limbs to work, and the brave heart to throb, under the controlling eye of the great Arbiter, then we say that this last, though he serve behind a counter at a retail trade, is a higher graduate in saintship than the most accomplished enthusiast of the cloister. Whatever be the Divine communication with human nature here, it can run through us safely, if at all, only like the electric fluid of the atmosphere above, when we stand in connection with the great earth-currents beneath our feet: and he who would have all and hold all within himself that comes from heaven will find, on his glass stool of insulation, but fruitless shocks or dead paralysis. No man, poising himself apart, can there set and solve his own problems, — of duty

Digitized by Google

any more than of truth. And, with all the rich painting of these "Lives of the Saints," nothing appears to us more deplorable than the image which they give of minds intrinsically great and good, vainly expending their intensest force against the impalpable resistance of their own passions *in vacuo*.

The formidable encroachments made by the Anglican party of late years, and the wide influence exercised by them through the indirect channels of an attractive literature, raise these topics of doctrine, morals, and taste into matters of national, and even political importance. The ecclesiastical phenomena of our time are very anomalous. While the clergy are, beyond comparison, more active and faithful than at any time since the Revolution, this is in great measure owing to an intellectual ferment among them, which places them at a greater distance than before from the sympathy of the nation which they serve. The fresh tide of ideas and sentiments which has rebaptized them with earnestness, and delivered them from routine, has poured in upon them from the Universities. It is of academic source, and of academic character. It is the accumulation of thought and theory, the product of books: the result even of a vast and deliberate design, conceived and partly realized by one commanding and systematizing intellect. Of that deep and vivifying mind the change in the clergy is, in great measure, but the propagated influence. Meanwhile, during this reanimation of the Church on the collegiate side, the tide of life without has run in the opposite direction; and the very feeling prevalent, that Oxford has been the scene

Digitized by Google

of a sort of Popish plot for plunging England back into Romanism, and, by a species of logical black art, spiriting away across the German Ocean the Reformation and all its works, has broken down popular faith in the simplicity and veracity of the clergy, and shaken the whole fabric. The new doctrines are hated; and the old ones — as would appear from the eagerness to be rid of them — were not satisfactory to the divines themselves. The people who believe on authority are pulled two ways; those who believe on conviction are pulled neither; and thus, while the momentum of an inert perseverance is lost, the *vis viva* of a new impulse is not gained. There is something, moreover, exceedingly offensive in the grand and sacerdotal style with which the new ritual pretensions are put forth by men who have only recently discovered them; and among the names most prominent in their assertion, there is one at least whose appearance in such a connection does more to discredit the whole movement than shoals of tracts and *Catenæ Patrum* to advance it. In the Times of March 28th appear certain resolutions having reference to the Gorham decision; they declare, among other alarming results of Mr. Gorham's interpretation, that the Evangelical "portion of the Church," by participation in "such conscious, wilful, and deliberate act, becomes formally separated from the Catholic body, and can no longer assure to its members the grace of the sacraments and the remission of sins." Among the subscribers to this denunciation against the Evangelical party are two sons of William Wilberforce! Every body asks, Were not

Digitized by Google

these gentlemen brought up at Clapham? — were they not baptized themselves by a vital clergyman, and catechized by a Cambridge saint? — was not Charles Simeon the trusted friend at the paternal house? — were they not, moreover, trained in a peculiar horror of wax candles and holy water, as in all the other essentials of decided piety? When did they discover the good father's "formal separation from the Catholic body," and his uncertain provision for the remission of their sins? And this is the school which, when it would keep stagnant the young thought of a new generation, preaches up "the inherent sanctity of *hereditary* religion"! Conscience no doubt is imperative, and superior to all weaknesses; but conscience bears, without forfeiture of authority, some little mingling of human affection; and few would have condemned a preference, in the present instance, for the silent modesty of filial reverence over the forward pomp of sacerdotal denunciation.

Be this as it may, the hierarchical style is looked on with suspicion in England, especially when it is an upstart affair, new to the ears of men fifty years old. It is ranked with the rhodomontade of a Mexican dictator, or the bombast of a Haytian emperor. The chief effect of the dissensions which have produced it is to startle quiet people into a discovery of what the Church theology really is; to convince them in what latitude of thought she lies; and show them that, while they have been drifting down the living current of centuries, she strives to hold to her moorings in the past, and denies that she even drags

Digitized by Google

her anchor in the least. The old doctrines being undisguisedly reproduced, people exclaim, "This is not what we believe, and we do not choose to be bound by it. It may be all right after the fashion of the old doctors; but somehow it does not ring like the Sermon on the Mount, and does not seem to fit with men that ride on railroads, read newspapers, and sail round the globe." The complaint, though felt rather than uttered, or uttered by those who cannot explain and justify it, is perfectly well founded. It is *impossible* for the layman of the nineteenth century to think after the manner of the fourth, or even of the sixteenth, and he must insist, sooner or later, on carrying the clergy with him. They, living more among books, may find it easier to sustain a stationary mode of mind; but they, too, must secretly feel a change, the open recognition of which would be an infinite relief to their sincerity. The affectation of immobility incurs in this world the penalty of destruction. Catholic theories can no more arrest the course of change, than the doctrines of a universal atmosphere can stop the wind. It may be very true that the Church is built upon a rock; but the rock is rooted in the earth, and stands above the sea, and with the mountains and the floods must roll on through the great seasons of Providence.

A glance backward into the past will show that the alienation of the national intelligence and piety from the Church system is not wonderful, or to be simply bewailed as a sign of degeneracy. That system, if we assume the Anglican point of view, was made up before the end of the fourth century; and if we

Digitized by Google

take the Evangelical, early in the sixteenth. No change has found admission since. Let any one cast his eye, however superficially, over the course of knowledge and the history of civilization during the last three centuries, and say whether the image men formed to themselves of the constitution of this universe, at the commencement of this time, could possibly remain equally credible at the end. It is vain to say that a revelation abides steadfast amid change: the dogmatic system of the Church is not a revelation, but a human elaboration of the contents, materials, and even accretions of revelation; and its soundness and durability as a structure depend, not simply on the substance of the living rock within it, but not less on the selection, the combination, the proportion of parts; for all which the architectonic intellect of man is alone responsible. No less vain is it to plead that the creeds have reference only to moral and religious truth, which lies above the reach, or at least beyond the range, of the inductive sciences and practical arts, and so shines with constancy through all their shifting light and shade. The allegation is not tenable in fact. The Articles of the Church abound with metaphysical propositions, with historical judgments, with verdicts of literary criticism, which have no claim whatsoever to a moral or religious character. This is not, in our opinion, to be charged as a fault against those who framed the code of belief, — unless on the ground of an excess in definition: it is impossible for faith to remain purely subjective; it looks within and without, and from its eager eye darts an interpreting glance on all things; it

Digitized by Google

has the attribute which Plato assigns to philosophy,—that it is συνοπτικός; and as it is ever in part a heritage, in part a correction, of the past, its position in relation to antecedent thought must needs be laid down. We do not, therefore, agree with those who complain of religion for meddling at all with physical and metaphysical questions, and mixing itself up with human history as well as divine. Minds at once inquisitive and devout cannot rest without a certain philosophy of faith, in which all that comes before their thought finds a place in harmony with their perception of a divine order. We will not even raise the question whether, in the age of the Reformation, the propositions expressive of such a theory might properly be erected into authoritative conditions of Christian fellowship. But in defending the right of theology to go out from its own centre, and clear itself all round by objective definitions, we forego the plea which was to excuse it from all change, and can no longer say that, being wholly ethical and spiritual, it is free from admixture with the mutable and mortal. Its liberty to *visit* the entire realm of knowledge is not to be converted into a hostile occupancy: the guest must not settle as the usurper, nor the seer's rod be turned into the iron sceptre. The essence of the religion of Christendom is eternal; but the dogmatic scheme constructed by applying it forward and backward in time from the last hour of chaos to the day of doom, and along all radii in space from "the spirits in prison" to the seventh heaven, must take the risks of human theory, and be open to the enlargements of human experience.

Digitized by Google

Now, consider only the picture of the physical universe familiar to the mind of the sixteenth century at its commencement, and trace the inevitable effect of our altered distribution of natural bodies in space. The Ptolemaic system — not refuted till 1543, and not renounced even by the learned for half a century more — had universal possession of the European imagination at the time when Luther preached. All men judged of the relations of earth and sky by the same immediate impressions of unaided sense which dictated the first chapter of Genesis. Under these conditions, not only was the Mosaic cosmogony accepted as a matter of course, but little difficulty was felt in conforming to even the narrow Hebrew conception of the actual system of the world, — a subterranean Hades, stored with incarcerated spirits, and a heaven rising in successive tiers for the reception of souls in light, and the personal abode of Christ and God; a place pictured rather as an Oriental edifice than as an astronomical creation. Those caverns under the earth, and those halls above, supplied a local hell and heaven, which rendered easy all the dogmatic imagery respecting the ascent and descent of beings from province to province of this realm. And, while the earth maintained its station in the midst, no misgiving was encountered in representing the spectacle of the Advent and Incarnation as a central object of attention to the universe, and the Redemption as a fact not in the interests of one world, but in the history of all. But by the telescope and the calculus these conceptions are set afloat and scattered through infinite

Digitized by Google

space, with no structural picture to give them coherence and support their relations.

From the architecture, turn to the chronology of nature. In the sixteenth century, no facts were known demanding more than some five or six thousand years for the past duration of the globe; nor was there any inducement to assign to different dates the origin of man and of his abode, or of this planet and the heavenly bodies. Hence, not only was there no hypothesis of development to embarrass by its rivalry the literal theory of creation, but no scruple was present to hinder the compression of the whole birth of things into six days. Thus the Sabbath rested undisturbed on its primitive foundation. That the Creative Power, having framed all else, should culminate in man, was no hard conception to those who deemed this earth the metropolis of the universe. Through the researches of geologists, this whole system of conceptions has become untenable. The process of creation has escaped all limits of chronology, and burst into infinitude of time, as well as space; and no Sedgwick or Buckland of the Church can henceforth read, without rationalizing interpretation, the passage of the Decalogue inscribed above every altar: — "For *in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day;* wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."

During the last three centuries, the knowledge of the earth's surface, and of the tribes that people it, has been vastly extended. The natural history of man, deriving light from new sources, and especially

Digitized by Google

from the contrasts and affinities of different languages, has become the object of a distinct science. We shall not be accused of over-statement if we affirm, as the result of this change, that the question as to the unity of human species, their descent from a single pair, is a perfectly open one. Notwithstanding the decision of the late Dr. Prichard, the weight of opinion is probably in favor of the distribution of mankind into several races, originally distinct. The topic, at all events, is not prohibited even by the "Index Expurgatorius" of conventional theology, and was freely discussed between Arnold and Whately in their correspondence. Any influence which should discourage such inquiries would be inimical to all the higher interests of society; and any intellectual clergyman would treat with just scorn the impertinent bigot who should accuse him of heresy for maintaining that a Papuan savage was of a different stock from the Caucasians. Yet is the bigot so entirely illogical? Is not the Church the commissioned medium of salvation? is not salvation conditional on regeneration? is not regeneration the reversal and obliteration of birth-sin? is not birth-sin an affair of lineage, transmitted from the corruption of Adam's nature? and was not that corruption the penalty of the fall? If, therefore, we are not all the children of one stock, either there must have been many Edens, and Satan must have offered a plurality of apples to numerous Eves, black, red, and white; or else the curse, and with it the counteracting redemption, must be valid for only one tribe. In both cases, the dogmatic scheme of the Church suffers

Digitized by Google

from manifest embarrasssment; in the first, from an incredible hypothesis, too absurd to name except for argument's sake; in the second, from a vast system of missionary effort, no less than of speculative belief, resting entirely on the universality of certain propositions respecting the lost condition of man through hereditary contamination. The Reformers would have staked their entire religion, without hesitation, on the assertion that all men are sons of Adam. Does any instructed man, in the present day, feel that on such a basis Christianity may fitly rest?

Examples might be multiplied without end. Dr. Buckland can tell us whether any change of opinion has taken place respecting the Noachic deluge; whether it was *always* thought a thing indifferent to Church theology to defend the doctrine of a universal flood, or to give it up; or whether any advocate was ever found so indiscreet as to work up an eager mass of evidence and hypothesis on this point, impressed more with the exultation of the triumphant divine than with the calmness of the inquiring philosopher.* And Bishop Thirlwall could pronounce whether the light thrown by comparative philology on the affinities of languages and the filiations of mankind affects at all the quiet credence with which, a century ago, the "Inspired Narrative" of the confusion of tongues was read by the learned, no less

* See Buckland's "*Reliquiæ Diluvianæ;* Observations on the Organic Remains contained in Caves, Fissures, and Diluvial Gravel and other Geological Phenomena, *attesting the Action of a Universal Deluge.*" 1823. Compare Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, Vol. I. p. 94, note, where this "attestation" is withdrawn.

Digitized by Google

than the unlearned; and whether, in general, the modern admission of a mythical element in the records of ancient nations can easily be repelled from the Hebrew literature, so as to place its monuments in the exceptional position of having *no* ante-historical period. These particular features in primeval history have, it is true, no *immediate* reference to the dogmatic system of the Church, but they belong to the same record that supplies the whole scheme with its theological data; and it is impossible to throw open to discussion the questions they involve, yet retain the adjacent topics under the key of ecclesiastical authority.

Again, let it be considered what a revolution has taken place in human physiology and psychology, bringing under the dominion of ascertained law a host of phenomena, once familiarly referred to preternatural agency. The mere removal of demonology from modern belief has introduced a wholly new condition of the human imagination, and alienated it from many conceptions formerly esteemed inseparable from orthodox faith. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the sphere yet open for Satanic interposition in the affairs of the world was not small, precarious, invisible, — the mere secret suggestion of a wicked thought, which after all might as well be indigenous as foreign, — but various and palpable; recognized not in creeds only, but in medicine and law; and furnishing formulas of expression to the learned, and a thousand usages to the people of every class. Lord Bacon was not above the belief in "possession." Sir Thomas Browne regarded the

Digitized by Google

denial of witchcraft in the light of downright atheism, inasmuch as the same authority which reveals the dispensations of God and his goodness declares no less clearly the agency of the false one and the delusions of sorcery. Witches were disposed of by a process of trial more indicative of a susceptible faith than of a very sensitive justice: they were put into a pair of scales, with the parish Bible for a counterpoise, and their guilt or innocence decided by weight. The more formal and deliberate procedure of the regular courts affords, however, still stronger proof of the tenacity with which this belief was interwoven with the religious faith of cultivated men: and the fact that two widows were hanged for witchcraft in 1665, under the sentence of Sir Matthew Hale, may help us to realize the entire change which has befallen the climate of modern thought.

Yet no one, we think, can look with the mere *lumen siccum* of a logical understanding at the arguments by which the supporters of the doctrine of possession defended their position, without confessing that, on the Church principle of using all canonical Scriptures, not merely "for example of life and instruction of manners," but as an "authority" "to establish any doctrine," their ground is unassailable.*

* We subjoin the account of the trial of the two poor creatures referred to; taking it from S. T. Coleridge's "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," p. 45.

"Rose Cullender and Amy Duny, widows, of Lowestoff, Suffolk, were tried for witchcraft, on the 10th March, 1665, at Bury St. Edmond's. Sir M. Hale told the jury, 'that he would not repeat the evidence unto them, lest by so doing he should wrong the evidence on the one side or the other. Only this acquainted them, that they had two

Digitized by Google

"Let a man," says Coleridge, "be once fully persuaded that there is no difference between the two positions, 'The Bible contains the religion revealed by God,' and 'Whatever is contained in the Bible is religion, and was revealed by God'; and that whatever can be said of the Bible, collectively taken, may and must be said of each and every sentence of the Bible, taken for and by itself, — and I no longer wonder at these paradoxes. I only object to the inconsistency of those who profess the same belief, and yet affect to look down with a contemptuous or compassionate smile on John Wesley for rejecting the Copernican system as incompatible therewith; or who exclaim, 'Wonderful!' when they hear that Sir Matthew Hale sent a crazy old woman to the gallows in honor of the Witch of Endor. In the

---

things to inquire after: first, whether or no these children were bewitched; secondly, whether the prisoners at the bar were guilty of it.

"'*That there were such creatures as witches, he made no doubt at all. For, first, the Scriptures had affirmed so much. Secondly, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons, which is an argument of their confidence in such a crime.* And such hath been the judgment of this kingdom, as appears by that act of Parliament which hath provided punishments proportionable to the quality of the offence. And desired them strictly to observe their evidence; and desired the great God of heaven to direct their hearts in the weighty thing they had in hand. For to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, were both an abomination to the Lord.' They were found guilty on thirteen indictments. The bewitched got well of all their pains the moment after the conviction; only Susan Chandler felt a pain like pricking of pins in her stomach. The judge and all the court felt fully satisfied with the verdict, and thereupon gave judgment against the witches, that they should be hanged. They were much urged to confess, but would not. They were executed on Monday, 17th March following, but they confessed nothing." — State Trials, VI. p. 700.

Digitized by Google

latter instance it might, I admit, have been an erroneous (though even at this day the all but universally received) interpretation of the word which we have rendered by *witch;* — but I challenge these divines and their adherents to establish the compatibility of a belief in the modern astronomy and natural philosophy with their and Wesley's doctrine respecting the inspired Scriptures, without reducing the doctrine itself to a plaything of wax, or rather to a half-inflated bladder, which, when the contents are rarefied in the heat of rhetorical generalities, swells out round, and without a crease or wrinkle; but bring it into the cool temperature of particulars, and you may press, and as it were except, what part you like — so it be but one part at a time — between your thumb and finger."

The state of belief, in relation to demoniacal possession, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, is evidenced, not merely by casual and private examples, but by the public statutes of the Church of England. In the seventy-second Ecclesiastical Canon, the *practice of exorcism by the clergy* is placed under regulation: it is classed with other offices of the ministry, — such as the keeping of fasts and holding meetings for sermons, and is submitted to the same restraints; that is, the license and direction of the bishop of the diocese must be first obtained and had under his hand and seal, ere a clergyman is to attempt, under pretence of possession or obsession, by fasting and prayer, to cast out any devil or devils. We would recommend to the Bishop of Exeter the revival of this neglected episcopal prerogative: this reserved right of expelling or retaining

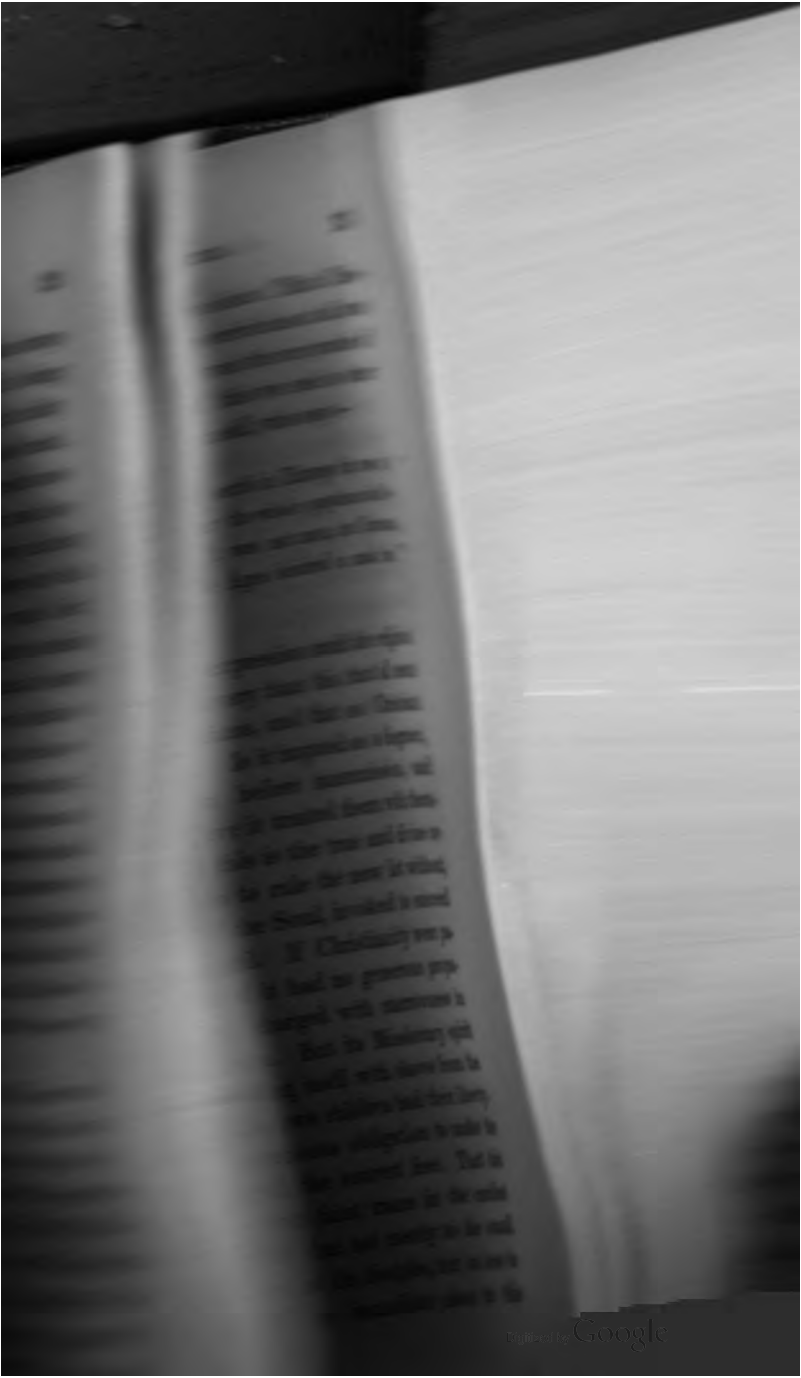
Digitized by Google

devils is no small part of the power to open and shut. Why let it lie idle? If exorcism is not a sacrament, it bears comparison with one: it casts out Satan, while baptism casts out his works. Is it not a part of the Apostolic commission, — "Cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give"? Why take up the transmitted authority by halves, — an authority given in the Gospels and reaffirmed by the Canons? Did not the same voice which commanded the twelve to baptize command them to exorcise? The operation of both offices is preternatural alike: and as even false prophets and apostles could cast out demons, there is no pretence for saying that the function is beyond the reach of Christ's true representatives on earth. Where, we ask, can this parallelism be broken? And if the progress of knowledge has put every sane man, though an ecclesiastic, out of condition for speaking of exorcism with a grave face, and forced every critic, however orthodox, to explain away, as best he can, the favorite evidence, with the first three Evangelists, of their Lord's Messiahship, viz. the instinctive recognition of Him by the devils who met his eye or heard his name, — is it to be expected that kindred conceptions, lying within the same scheme, should be as welcome to the minds of men as they were three centuries ago?

These changes in the whole intellectual atmosphere of the age are patent to all the world. They affect the general body of the educated laity, so as to place them in the most painful or the most dangerous of all positions, — a position *above* the faith which they profess. Such men have to make excuses for that

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



which should penetrate and rule their nature; and to patronize where they should adore. The somewhat narrow, though scholarly, education of the clergy may often screen them from the full effect of this popular light of the time. But then, on the other hand, the great advance made during the last half-century in the theological sciences is known, for the most part, to them alone; and if this has not largely modified their whole conception of the Christian faith, and made them conscious of many a doubt within their system, and a whole world of thought beyond it, the effect has been very different from that which the devoutest and most sober minds have experienced in every other Protestant country. The light which has been thrown on the origin and structure of the earliest Christian records, — on the presence within them of purely local and human elements, — on the several streams of Jewish, Oriental, and Platonic influence, which blended with divine constituents to form the creeds of Christendom, — has rendered necessary a freer and larger method for disengaging the permanent from the transitory in the Church than was possible to the criticism of the sixteenth century. To those who study in earnest for holy orders, this is no secret. And so keenly do they feel the discrepancy between what they must promise to teach and what they apprehend to be true, that the number is yearly increasing of candidates who are repelled from the Church by the conditions of ordination. These cases are smothered and kept secret, as far as possible; but to many it is well known that they comprise a large proportion of the

Digitized by Google

finest genius and devoutest conscience that might of late years have been gained to the service of the altar. One after another have such men been brought, in the deep mood of holy faith and discipleship, to the very threshold of the Church; but when the moment of entrance came, the low and narrow portal would not let the high thought and the great heart pass. Minds of puny stature, or of a thin subtlety, or of compressible scrupulosity, slip through; while natures at once of massive reality and of divine proportions are excluded: the priest glides in; but the prophet stands without. Who can wonder at the spreading impression, that statesmen and high ecclesiastics fear and hate to see the consecration of earnest genius to religion! that they *wish* the Church to be a refuge for mediocrity! and that, so long as sagacious dulness or pliant laxity shall find no hinderance, they are content to let the Christianity of England lie far beyond the average intelligence of her people, and sink into an object of unbelief to the learned, contempt to the intellectual, and shame and sorrow to the devout! If they think by such means to clear away all troublesome spirits, and maintain a dignified, but unproductive repose, even this unworthy policy experience will convict of mistake. There are other dangers to her establishment, and to the State with which it is connected, greater than can arise from eminent and powerful personal qualities in its ministers. The erratic energies of original minds are, no doubt, difficult to adjust with the drowsy persistency of an aristocratic Church; and that Beresfords and Blomfields are not anxious for

Digitized by Google

the companionship of young seers, with fresh eye, and brotherhoods under vows of piety and of poverty, is far from strange. The decent and tasteful formalism which with inoffensive elocution drops the heavenly word upon the earth-cold pavement of a cathedral; which thinks infinite questions honored with the vehicle of gentlemanly breath; which is content if burning truths but melt a little way into the icy heart of fashion ere they become extinct, — is preferred, on very intelligible grounds, to a deeper and more insatiable fervor. Yet even to the temporal peace of a Church there is a peril more alarming than would be the genius of Pascal, the visions of Bunyan, and the enthusiasm of Wesley. When men, who begin life with the passions of the hustings, end it with the professions of the saint; when the pamphleteers of a faction become successors of the Apostles and vicars of Christ; when the perturbations of personal temper appear beneath the holy and oily surface of episcopal address, and, under plea of zeal for souls, the mitred party-leader finds his occupation once again, — the repose of the Church is not less broken than if a Baxter had been pronounced orthodox, or a Whitefield had not carried off his converted colliers to the conventicle. The higher order of minds may demand too much freedom, but the lower do not always prove conveniently pliant. If they secure you against the chances of a grand faith, they do not save you from the danger of a mean superstition; and the aggressive fervor of the one may need less vigilance than the proud obstinacy of the other.

Digitized by Google

Religious enthusiasm is the outburst of an individual's mind, and, radiating from his spirit, passes beyond this living centre in fainter waves away. A sacerdotal superstition, on the other hand, is the fixed passion of a class which remains permanent, and whose collective spirit can but slowly change. From the very nature of the case, it exists under conditions inaccessible to reason. It relies for support on the class of feelings which have subjugated men to thaumaturgic imposture; and it so blends the interested pride with possibly the disinterested faith of the priesthood, as to produce a certain amphibious passion between hypocrisy and conviction, found peculiarly in the decline of religions. That passion is, perhaps, of all human influences the most difficult for the State to encounter. It is neither temporal nor spiritual; it has neither the prudence of reason, nor the generosity of faith; it is closed alike to persuasion and to affection; it lives neither on the land nor in the stream; but evades you in the slime, where the produce of the secular earth grows rank, and the waters of a pure enthusiasm lie stagnant. This monster passion is growing huge in England just now; — "Behemoth, in the covert of the reed and of the fens, that trusteth he can draw up Jordan into his mouth"; but "from the mountains shall new rivers come down," and, "like a lion by the swelling of Jordan," he will be borne away.

What, then, is the duty of the State towards the Church in a crisis like the present? — to represent, by a more intelligible demeanor than ever before, the

Digitized by Google

alienated affections of the country; and, in relation to dogmatic conditions of fellowship, to take a course directly opposite to the tendency of the agitating ecclesiastics. The sacerdotal party are struggling for a narrowed creed; the Judicial Committee have wisely vindicated the principle of latitude. The Anglicans contend for dogmatic unity; let the State boldly demand provision for variety. The government is trustee in this matter, not only for a Church already marked internally by wide diversities, but for a nation of which nearly one half has, at different periods, been injuriously driven from her pale. The civil disabilities of these excluded classes having been removed, their ecclesiastical excommunication cannot safely remain neglected in any future legislation for the Church; and so far from any contraction of the terms of communion being for an instant entertained, a gradual enlargement of them ought to be steadily enforced by the government. Were all harmonious and healthful within the pale, there might be some fair excuse for leaving in quiet action what answered at least the wants of a definite majority in the country; but it is notorious that if to-morrow all the sects of the nation were thrust into the Church, its disunion and diversities of creed would be no greater than at present; and its only decent plea against comprehension is entirely forfeited. Besides, a state cannot lend itself as a party to theological disputes, but is bound to estimate the Church purely by its moral efficiency, — its competency to express and sustain the highest life of the people, to hold and train their affections, and to educate them

Digitized by Google

according to their consciences, in their obligations as citizens of this world and children of God.

If there be in a country an organized community of Christians, enjoying the confidence and sympathy of the nation at large, and able, by appeal to reverential feeling, to secure those moralities of the social state which law can defend only by coercion, we know of no valid theoretical objection against the endowment of such a body by the legislature; and if its members choose to include within their aim other ends, foreign to the purposes of government, — such as the removal of mystic stains by mystic rites, — let them be free to do so, *provided no damage is thus done to the prior state requisites.* But this proviso must be stringently enforced; and if the supplementary ends are of a nature to prejudice the primary; if they comprise dogmas and ceremonies by which the range of social agency is restricted and its integrity lowered; above all, if they so withdraw the mind of the clergyman from the rational and moral interests of society as to convert him into an obstacle in the way of national education and culture, except on the exclusive terms of his professional speciality, — then the alliance is justly forfeited, and the State, failing to gain the stipulated benefits, reclaims of right the vested endowment. Can any candid observer affirm that the Established Church fairly performs the national function intrusted to her? Is she not at this moment spending all her zeal on disputes which, but for their possible results, the nation regards with contemptuous indifference? Have her teachings been such, her methods of operation such, as to retain in her faith and power the

Digitized by Google

great working class of this country? She complains perhaps of the copresence of rival sects, that break and paralyze her energies. But did she not herself disown them and drive them out? and have they not had, in her coldness or narrowness, such sufficient cause to quit her communion, that their founders are, for the most part, remembered with a just reverence, accounted as the worthies of our history, and acknowledged to have done a good work? To what, so much as to the incompetency and mismanagement of the Church, are we to ascribe the state of things so forcibly described by Mr. Thom, in the following page?

"The Christian Church has instruments enough, and self-sacrifice enough, to parcel the world among her ministers, to break up the close layers of its masses so that, instead of only like consorting with like, and ignorance and vice pressed together, lying in thick strata on one another, human beings, instead of dense, impermeable clusters, should stand forth, individual and distinct, so that air and light could circulate around them, and not one soul be left without living contact, through a brother's touch, with the sympathies of earth and the supports of heaven. But the Christian Church cannot do this as it now exists. With its conflicting creeds, and rival interests, and deadly jealousies, it cannot unite its devoted servants, and send them forth in one spirit to divide the toil between them. If we were all of one heart, believing that holy affections are the only powers that can enlighten and regenerate fallen men, there might not be a spot in all this land in which even an individual could be found without the light and love of a brother's spirit bent full upon him. And why is not this the case now? Because, in consequence of our divisions about doctrines, *Christianity cannot be locally applied.* In

Digitized by Google

that fact lies mainly the explanation of the spiritual condition and destitution of the people. A parochial administration of Christianity, a beautiful and competent idea, is now an impossibility. A catholic religion requires a catholic church; but we have only *Roman* catholic churches, and Church of England churches, and Calvinistic churches, and other reciprocally repelling and antagonistic churches. If Christianity was one power, and could use the world's wisdom of the division of labor, it could assign to each manageable district its own responsible agency, sufficient to flood it with light. But this cannot be where you will hardly find two neighboring houses in which the same theory of salvation is accepted. And so our Christian churches gather their isolated worshippers from all quarters; and in our large towns, at least, no man has an allotted field, and no church and no person is charged with the spiritual condition of any spot. And thus our churches sit apart, exerting some attraction over scattered individuals of like affinities among the dispersed multitudes, but with no power of thoroughly occupying the Field of the World, each cultivating its own corner of the vineyard. And as with that village of Samaria which would not receive our Lord because his face was as though he was going to Jerusalem, there are places in Christian lands where disciples, earnest and beloved as James and John, would not be received; and, probably, like James and John, might know so little what spirit they are of, as to be ready to call down fire from heaven in their Master's name. These are the consequences of established creeds and churches, — and this the price we pay for a Religion of Doctrines, instead of a religion that looks only to the spirit and the life; for a religion of saving orthodoxes, instead of a religion of all-purifying love. The prophecy remains to be fulfilled, and Christianity cannot occupy the world as the waters cover the deep, because Theology forbids the union and the distribution of its pow-

Digitized by Google

ers. We have left to Sin and Satan the advantage of the principle, Divide and conquer."—*Religion, the Church, and the People*, p. 20.

The Church of England has enjoyed rare opportunities. It wants nothing that history can give to render it respectable. It lost little of the external dignity of the elder system, when it opened a way for some infusion of energy from the Reformation. Its hierarchy ascends by the same gradations, and retains the same titles, as the parent body; its creeds are translations of ancient forms; its liturgy is a provincial idiom of the language of the universal Church. The Anglicans are right in maintaining that it was not of Protestant origin, but rather a national graft detached from the stem of so many centuries; that it did not rudely tear away, but simply trained around the local structure, the sacred ivy of antiquity. Yet it was not left without the purifying influence of a day of persecution, as well as the prolonged contact of more earnest and spiritual reformers, who sometimes introduced within the pale the self-denying virtues and rude fervor that are the secret of popular power. The honorable duty was devolved upon it, by the folly of a king, of being the advocate of liberty, and the representative of injured conscience. It has had the almost uninterrupted and exclusive command of all the resources and all the distinctions of the ancient universities, and has enriched English literature with some of its most cherished names. If ever a Church has had a chance of collecting into the focus of its action the most various and even opposite influences that can sway the human mind, it is the Church of England.

Digitized by Google

Yet, at last, the day is coming when the account will be asked of these opportunities. The churches of our forefathers will not be permanently left to the sort of teachers who are now wearying the world with their puerilities, and shocking it with their intolerance; nor the ecclesiastical estates of the nation abandoned to the guardianship which has been so shamefully abused. To the large and humiliating subject of the Church temporalities, we have abstained from adverting. Convinced as we are, that what alone the Church cares to teach has ceased to be the real religion of this nation, we have not thought it worth while to enter into the abuses of secular administration. The exposure of the Ecclesiastical Commission is fresh in every one's recollection. And in Mr. Beeston's sensible pamphlet will be found a series of facts as to the management of episcopal and chapter lands, which we should think it impossible to parallel in the history of private rapacity and corporate dishonesty.

"Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede Pœna claudo."

No one who reads the statements to which we refer can believe that the reckoning will be long delayed; and among the chances of the near future, we esteem it not the least, that an irresistible force of opinion will support in substance the prayer of a Memorial to the Queen, which appeared in this "Review" two years ago, — for FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.*

"Admittance to the Universities of Oxford and

* See the No. for July, 1848, p. 497.

Digitized by Google

Cambridge, and the liberty of worshipping and expounding the Scriptures in the churches of our ancestors, are now made to depend upon subscription to certain articles of faith known as the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

"This test, when first established, was a departure from the principle of the Protestant Reformation, founded upon the right of private judgment, without which there can be no progress in religious truth; and it led to those lamentable schisms which have since divided English Protestants into Churchmen and Dissenters of various denominations, who would otherwise have remained a united religious community. These schisms are now widely extending, from the differences which have lately sprung up within the Church itself upon the meaning of the Thirty-nine Articles; and we call upon your Majesty, by removing this cause of sectarian distinctions, as a middle wall of partition unknown to Christianity, and by promoting the application of the divine precepts of universal charity, to restore among your Majesty's subjects the 'unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.'

"We ask *for the repeal of the Act of Uniformity* (14 Car. II. c. 4); *the abolition of all subscription tests for admission to universities, the houses of Parliament, or for holy orders; and that in the case of all churches built, endowed, or supported with public money, the people, by their local representatives, or in their religious congregations, shall have a voice in the appointment of their own religious teachers.*"

Digitized by Google

THE BATTLE OF THE CHURCHES.*

[From the Westminster Review for January, 1851.]

In 1822, a French philosopher discovered the grand law of human progression, revealed it to applauding Paris, brought the history of all civilized nations to pronounce it infallible, and computed from it the future course of European society. The mind of man, we are assured by Auguste Comte, passes by invariable necessity through three stages of development;—the state of religion, or fiction; of metaphysics, or abstract thought; of science, or positive

---

* 1. Lectures on Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in submitting to the Catholic Church. By John Henry Newman, Priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Second Edition. London. 1850.

2. The British Churches in Relation to the British People. By Edward Miall. London. 1849.

3. Gilbert's Pamphlets, including the Pope's Brief; Cardinal Wiseman's Pastoral; Lord John Russell's Letter, &c.

4. The Bishop of London's Charge, delivered in St. Paul's, Saturday, Nov. 2d, 1850.

5. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the new Hierarchy. By George Bowyer, Esq., D. C. L. London. 1850.

6. Cardinal Wiseman's Appeal to the Reason and Good Feeling of the British People. Nov. 19, 1850.

7. Lord Beaumont's Letter to the Earl of Zetland. Times, Nov. 26, 1850.

Digitized by Google

knowledge.* No change in this order, no return upon its steps, is possible; the shadow cannot retreat upon the dial, or the man return to the stature of the child. Every one who is not behind the age will tell you, that he has outlived the theology of his infancy and the philosophy of his youth, to settle down on a physical belief in the ripeness of his powers. And so, too, the world, passing from myth to metaphysics, and from metaphysics to induction, begins with the Bible and ends with the "Cours de Philosophie Positive." To the schools of the prophets succeeds "L'Ecole Polytechnique"; and our intellect, having surmounted the meridians of God and the Soul, culminates in the apprehension of material nature. Henceforth the problems so intensely attractive to speculation, and so variously answered by faith, retire from the field of thought. They have an interest, as in some sense the autobiography of an adolescent world: but they were never to return in living action upon the earth.

In 1850, the most practical nation of Europe, — the nation in which the high-priest of inductive science was Chancellor nearly two centuries and a half ago, — where the law of gravitation, and the theory of the tides, and the aberration of light, were demonstrated, the circulation of the blood discovered, the steam-engine invented, the first railroad made, — the nation of factories and ships, — with instinct against all hypotheses, and impatience for every subtlety, —

* Cours de Philosophie Positive. 1ere Leçon, p. 3, et seqq. 51e Leçon, p. 653, et seqq.

Digitized by Google

signs requisitions about the grace of baptism, holds county meetings on the doctrine of Apostolicity, demands leading articles on the remission of sins, and listens in crowded town-halls to the canon law and the Tridentine decrees. M. Comte's law stands aghast. Since the memorable date of his discovery, the world must have been altered: he found it in its last stage; it is now in its first: it had then for some ages emerged from the last trail of theology; it has now plunged again into the very nucleus of that nebulous light. The vaticinations of philosophy on human affairs are seldom more fortunate than studies in the Apocalypse; the pomp of discovery becomes ludicrous in the completeness of the frustration. In the present instance, this can be no just matter of surprise or regret; it was a bold, and by no means a cheerful presumption, that mankind could never again feel an interest in those awful topics which have so long and deeply engaged their curiosity and affections. Were the prospect ever so inviting of such an advance into the maturity of reason, a shade of melancholy wonder would fall back on the long infancy of the race. We would not willingly, for the most brilliant promise of the future, be made utterly ashamed of the past. But if, as Comte's law would persuade us, the whole career of religion on the earth is but the action of a nursery drama; if, until it is played out, the real business of this world cannot begin; if the energies displayed in it pursue illusions, and are barren as the tossing of the arms in dreams, — with what sad eye must we look on the greater part of human history! The faith, which is the first ce-

Digitized by Google

ment of nations and source of law, is but the trick of nature's police for cheating them into order. The poetry which issues from mythology and leads to history, springs from a root that bears no truth. The greatest revolutions the world has ever seen have broken forth from Jerusalem, from Mecca, from Wittenberg, to sweep over the earth without a meaning, and pass away. The old Hebrew race survives, testifying to nothing, but perfectly fulfilling its destiny by selling quills and buying old clothes. The Church of Rome, of all institutions the most august and durable,—which crosses the chasm between ancient and modern times, and the ocean between the New and Old World; which has cost mankind more thought and treasure, and given them a more wonderful guidance, than any earlier or later agency,—has been but an empty presence, the richest pageant in the carnival of folly. All the thought and genius spent on questions of faith, and inspired by the sentiments of devotion, have been wasted and misapplied: they come down to us, not for our help, but for our warning; and if we admire them, we catch no high contagion of wisdom. In short, if all the divinity, all the speculative philosophy, all the poetry and records of religion, are to be banished to the juvenile library of the world, what literature remains to be the heritage of its maturity? A theory which treats the "theological condition" of the human mind as one which is to be outgrown, exhibits history in the dreariest light, as a confused waste of unproductive activity and misguided faculty. We know of nothing to countenance such a contemptuous interpretation of

Digitized by Google

the historical development of mankind; or to encourage the belief that the passions, which direct themselves on supernatural objects, have spent their force. Their partial and local decadence, a phenomenon invariably marking, not the advance, but the decline of national life, has hitherto been succeeded by some wider renewal of their power. They have shown themselves capable of coexisting with the greatest vigor of intellect, the highest style of character, and the most various capacity for thought or for affairs. If we are amazed at the absurdities to which they sometimes commit themselves, we find a parallel in the superstitions of the dry reason; and the devotee, who expects miracles from a saint's bones, is not more credulous than the mesmerist, who undertakes to read a newspaper through a brick wall. If we complain of the dissensions produced by rival creeds, we are met by the more fatal disintegration effected by sceptic egotism: and must confess that the disruption of grand masses of society, as at the Reformation, is less terrible than the silent dissolution of all moral and ideal cohesion. And however monstrous the crimes into which ecclesiastical passions betray men, they are, after all, less revolting than the loathsome atrocities of periods lost to all restraints of reverence; and even the Papacy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries appears innocent, in comparison with the government of Asia and Greece under Alexander's successors, and of the Empire during the decline of Rome. We cannot admit that the theological turn of the present excitement in England betokens a retrograde course of civilization.

Digitized by Google

A true British Protestant, whose notions of "Popery" are limited to what he hears from an Evangelical curate, or has seen at the opening of a Jesuit church, looks on the whole system as an obsolete mummery; and no more believes that men of sense can seriously adopt it, than that they will be converted to the practice of eating their dinner with a Chinaman's chop-sticks instead of the knife and fork. He pictures to himself a number of celibate gentlemen, who glide through a sort of minuet by candlelight around the altar, and worship the creature instead of the Creator, and keep the Bible out of every body's way, and make people easy about their sins: and he is positive that no one above a "poor Irishman" can fail to see through such nonsense. Few even of educated Englishmen have any suspicion of the depth and solidity of the Catholic dogma, its wide and various adaptation to wants ineffaceable from the human heart, its wonderful fusion of the supernatural into the natural life, its vast resources for a powerful hold upon the conscience. We doubt whether any single Reformed Church can present a theory of religion comparable with it in comprehensiveness, in logical coherence, in the well-guarded disposition of its parts. Into this interior view, however, the popular polemics neither give nor have the slightest insight; and hence it is a common error, both to underrate the natural power of the Romish scheme and to mistake the quarter in which it is most likely to be felt. It is not among the ignorant and vulgar, but among the intellectual and imaginative, — not by appeals to the senses in worship, but by consist-

Digitized by Google

ency and subtlety of thought, — that in our days converts will be made to the ancient Church. We have receded far from the Reformation by length of time; the management of the controversy has degenerated; it has been debased by political passions, and turned upon the grossest external features of the case: and when a thoughtful man, accustomed to defer to historical authority, and competent to estimate moral theories as a whole, is led to penetrate beneath the surface, he is unprepared for the sight of so much speculative grandeur, and if he have been a *mere* Anglican or Lutheran, is perhaps astonished into the conclusion, that the elder system has the advantage in philosophy and antiquity alike. From this, among other causes, we incline to think that the Roman Catholic reaction may proceed considerably further in this country ere it receives any effectual check. The academical training and the clerical teaching of the upper classes have not qualified them to resist it. At the other end of society there are large masses who cannot be considered inaccessible to any missionary influence, affectionately and perseveringly applied. Not all men, in a crowded community, are capable of the independence, the self-subsistence, without which Protestantism sinks into personal anarchy. The class of weak, dependent characters, that cannot stand alone in the struggle of life, are unprovided for in the modern system of the world. The coöperative theorist tries to take them up. But somehow or other he is usually a man with whom, by a strange fatality, coöperation is impossible; intent on uniting all men, yet himself not

Digitized by Google

agreeing with any; with individuality so intense and exclusive, that it produces all the effect of intolerant self-will; and thus the very plans which by his hypothesis are inevitable, are by his temper made impracticable. He appeals, however, and successfully, to the uneasiness felt by the feeble in the strife and pressure of the world; he fills the imagination with visions of repose and sympathy; he awakens the craving for unity and incorporation in some vast and sustaining society. And whence is this desire, disappointed of its first promise, to obtain its satisfaction? Is it impossible that it may accept proposals from the most ancient, the most august, the most gigantic organization which the world has ever seen? that it may take refuge in a body which invests indigence with sanctity, — which cares for its members, one by one, — which has a real past instead of a fancied future, and warms the mind with the coloring of rich traditions, — which, in providing for the poorest want of the moment, enrolls the disciple in a commonwealth spread through all ages and both worlds? Whatever socialistic tendency may be diffused through the English mind is not unlikely, in spite of a promise diametrically opposite, to turn to the advantage of the Catholic cause. The middle classes of this country, and the foremost ranks of the artisans, have been so thoroughly cast in the Protestant mould, and so jealously vindicate their sturdy individuality, that no reaction from Rome will affect *them* with any feelings but of amazement and contempt. Still, in the peculiar combinations of the present period, materials enough

Digitized by Google

exist in England for the successful operations of a well-equipped, devoted, and skilful priesthood; and if the prudence of Rome has failed her as to the *manner* of her recent advance, her true instinct has perhaps detected the right *moment*. It must be admitted that his Holiness has thoroughly puzzled the English people. It is not clear to them how they should comport themselves towards his pretensions. They have objections to arrogance at all times: and when an Italian priest meddles with their national geography, disposes of their counties, draws lines around their cities, and, fixing an admiring eye on the unfurnished cathedrals of Westminster and Beverley, supplies bishops for their future adornment, they feel inclined at least to let him know that *they* are here, and that England is not an unoccupied colony to be parcelled out among his flock. But they read Cardinal Wiseman's Appeal; and become convinced that, if any thing is amiss, it is their own fault; for that, apparently, nothing has been done beyond the fair scope of law. Then it is useless to be angry, unless they alter the law: yet to repent of what they did, with a purpose of justice, and in a temper of generous trust; to recall their deliberate concession of free religious development; to resume again the detestable policy of theologic legislation,— is a course which they would feel ashamed to contemplate. Moreover, in such a course, it is equally difficult to know how to begin, and where to stop. To legislate about mere names and titles, apart from the functions they denote, would be a helpless expression of childish irritation; to prohibit the offices

Digitized by Google

themselves would be to drive a wounding law into the interior structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Were this admissible, what principle would remain to hinder the dissolution by law of the Methodist Conference, or the Free Church Synods? Yet even those who most clearly see the dangers of action at the present crisis arrive regretfully, we think, at a conclusion in favor of entire inaction. An uneasy suspicion remains, that a step made good by the Papal hierarchy introduces an unsound element into English life; that the case of the Roman Catholics is not parallel with that of the modern Nonconformists; and that, however we may ignore the red hat and the archiepiscopal title, Dr. Wiseman continues, after all, something more to the state than a "Dissenting minister." These impressions, we think, are to a certain extent wholesome and legitimate; and may be at once justified and moderated by a glance at the theory and inherent action of the Roman Church, especially in its coexistence with the state.

All *Protestant* controversies turn upon questions of *doctrine;* all Protestant sects are marked off by some peculiarity of creed; and whoever, in the conscientious exercise of his private thought, approves of the distinctive peculiarity, thereby falls into membership of the sect, which is but the voluntary concurrence of many individuals in the same confession. In the whole circle of Christian, or quasi-Christian doctrines, there is not a point which has not been looked at by some believer or other, with such intensity as to grow incandescent before his mind, — to radiate a divine light upon him, and to be assumed as

Digitized by Google

the centre of a system. Like the astronomer, intent on some suspected mystery in a star of inferior magnitude, he directs his soul — turned by some special susceptibility into a powerful reflector — towards one of the lesser lights in the great arch of faith, is dazzled by what the natural vision can scarce discern, and suffers even neighboring objects to remain in shade, and whole constellations of truth to lie beyond his field of view. Each sect being thus the direct result of some individuality, not even its own members pretend that its specialty is to be held up as an essential: they claim for it no other merit than that of recovering some important position from unmerited neglect. At the period of the Reformation, indeed, a different feeling prevailed. It was then thought a very serious thing to *separate* from a previous communion, and constitute a new one; and nothing short of a difference in "fundamentals" was held as a justifying plea. But the process has been so often repeated, and by protracted indulgence to individuality the religious sympathies have grown so fastidious, that distinctions even more trivial, descending from conscience to opinion, and from opinion to taste, have become familiar as demarcations of worship. Hence, to the Protestant apprehension, denominations without end may coexist within the wide embrace of Christianity; and provided the deviations do not run beyond certain ill-determined bounds, they involve no forfeiture of the Christian name. "What do these people believe?" is the question of the passer-by, as he sees the crowd streaming from the conventicle of some new sect

Digitized by Google

or sectiuncle. Each Nonconformist name suggests, to those who know its history, some particular tenet or turn of thought, of which it has undertaken the guardianship; — Methodism expounds the new birth; Calvinism, the irrevocable decrees; Quakerism, the influence of the Spirit; Lutheranism, the justification by faith. Now this inveterate habit of attending exclusively to doctrines, Protestants are apt to carry into their estimates of the Romish system. They put it down among the sects of Christendom, and judge it as they would Moravianism or Presbyterianism. They accuse its worship of idolatry, and its creed of falsehood; they are offended by the apparent contrast with the simplicity of their own Scriptural or rational scheme; and yield either to all the antipathies of intolerant zeal, or to the mild contempt of tolerant indifference.

Both results are equally unwarranted. If Catholicism be a superstition, that is no reason for interfering with it by law. If it is not more a superstition than Methodism, that is no proof that it is as little dangerous. Whether its solution of questions of divinity be wiser or more foolish than that of the Protestant Confessions, is a matter with which the state has no concern. It may go astray on all the topics of the Thirty-nine Articles, may blaspheme in its prayers to the "Mother of God," may be idolatrous in the mass and pagan in the ritual, without justifying the slightest legislative check. Were it heretical as Antichrist, and false as the scarlet abomination, its career should run free of the Attorney-General. Englishmen enjoy — as insepara-

Digitized by Google

ble from freedom of conscience — unlimited right of error and delusion. There is (or recently was) an establishment near London for the adoration of the Vital Principle; where it is the most serious of crimes to eat beef, a deplorable infirmity to cut a cabbage, and the height of holiness to live on apples ripely dropping into the expectant aprons of devotees. The disciples of Mr. Holyoake undertake the propaganda of Atheism. The Book of Mormon succeeds among thousands in the North to all the honors of the Bible. And a nation which is wise enough to leave these things unmolested by coercive check cannot abandon its forbearance in dealing with the confessional and the eucharistic sacrifice. If the Latter-day Saints may organize their staff of "Angels," and send them, in the name of Joe Smith, to baptize converted potters and believing housemaids in the waters of every large river; the Catholics cannot, on any charge of superstition, be denied their order of bishops, for the supervision of their priesthood, and the governance of their faithful. After tolerating so much new nonsense, we have lost all plea for growing angry with the old.

If, then, we had to deal simply with a form of worship and theology, there would be no ground for distinguishing between the case of the Catholics and that of the Dissenters. And practically, perhaps, in the actual condition of Europe, the question now in agitation might be permitted to rest there. But, in fairness to the Protestant feeling, it should never be forgotten that the Roman Catholic system presents a feature absent from every other va-

Digitized by Google

riety of Nonconformity. It is not a RELIGION only, but a POLITY; — and this in a very peculiar sense. Other systems also — as the Presbyterian — include among their doctrines an opinion in favor of some particular church-government; — which opinion, however, professing to be derived from Scripture by use of private judgment, stands, in their case, on the same footing with every other article of their creed. You might differ from John Knox about Synods, without prejudice to your agreement in all else. But with the Romish Church it is different. It is not that her religion contains a Polity: but that her Polity contains the whole religion. The truths she publishes exist only as in its keeping, and rest only on its guaranty: and if you invalidate it, they would vanish, like the promissory notes of a corporation whose charter was proved false. Christianity, in her view, is not a Doctrine, productive of institutions through spontaneous action on individual minds; but an Institution, the perpetual source of doctrine for individual obedience and trust. Revelation is not a mere communication of truth, not a transitory visit of heaven to earth, ascertained by human testimony, and fixed in historical records: but a continuous Incarnation of Deity, a permanent Real Presence of the Infinite in certain selected persons and consecrated objects. The same Divine Epiphany which began with the person of the Saviour has never since abandoned the world: it exists, in all its awfulness and power, only embodied no longer in a redeeming individual but in a redeeming Church. The word of inspiration, the

Digitized by Google

deed of miracle, the authority to condemn and to forgive, remain as when Christ taught in the temple, walked on the sea, denounced the Pharisee, and accepted the penitent. These functions, as exercised by him, were only in their incipient stage; he came, — to exemplify them indeed, but chiefly to incorporate them in a Body which should hold and transmit them to the end of time. From his person they passed to the College of the Twelve, under the headship of Peter; and thence, in perpetual Apostleship, to the Bishops and Pastors, ordained through legitimate hands, for the governance of disciples. These officers are the sole depositaries, the authorized trustees, of Divine grace; whose decision, whether they open or shut the gate of mercy, is registered in heaven and is without appeal. Not that they can play with this power, and dispose of it by arbitrary will. The media through which it is to flow have been divinely appointed: its channels are limited to certain physical substances and bodily acts or postures, selected at first hand for the purpose; — water at one time, bread at another, oil at a third, handling of the head at a fourth. But the infusion of the supernatural efficacy into these "alvei" depends on an act of the appointed official; through whom alone the divine matter — no longer choked up — can have free currency into the persons of believers. To this inheritance of Miracle is added a stewardship of Inspiration. The Episcopate is Keeper of the Christian Records: and as those records are only the first germ of an undeveloped revelation, with the same body is left the exclusive power of unfold-

Digitized by Google

ing their significance, and directing the growth and expansion of their ever-fertile principles. Whatever interpretation the hierarchy may put upon the Scriptures, whatever doctrine or discipline they may announce as agreeable with the mind of God, must be accepted as infallible and authoritative. The same Spirit of absolute Truth which spoke in the living voice of Christ, which guided the pen of Evangelists, still prolongs itself in the thought and counsels of bishops, and renders their collective decisions binding as divine oracles. The people who form the obedient mass of the Catholic Body are not without a share of this miraculous light in the soul; not indeed for the discernment of any new truth, but for the apprehension of the old. The moment the disciple is incorporated in the Church, faith bursts into sight: he passes from opinion into knowledge: he perceives the objects of his worship, and the truth of his creed, with more than the certainty of sense: and as he bows before the altar, or commits himself to the "Mother of God," the Real Presence and the invisible world are as immediately with him as the Breviary and the Crucifix. Through the whole Catholic atmosphere is diffused a preternatural medium of *clairvoyance*, which at every touch of its ritual vibrates into activity, and opens to adoring view mysteries hid from minds without.*

Now, with the spiritual aspects of this theory we

* Adequate authority for these statements will be found in Dr. Moehler's Symbolism, Part I. Chap. V., and in Newman's Lectures, III. p. 66, and Lect. IX. *passim*.

Digitized by Google

are not here concerned. Reason has no jurisdiction over the inspiration that transcends it. But there is an humbler task to which the common intellect is not incompetent. We may plant this system in a political community, set it down beside the state, imagine it surrounded by families, and schools, and municipalities, and parliaments, by the prison and the court of justice; within the shadow of law and in presence of sovereignty: and we may ask, how it will work amid these august symbols of a nation's life, how adjust itself in relation to them? Will it leave them to their free development? Can it tranquilly coexist with them, and be content to see them occupy the scope which English traditions and English usage have secured for them? We are convinced it cannot; that every step it may make is an encroachment upon wholesome liberty; that it is innocent only where it is insignificant, and where it is ascendant will neither part with power nor use it well; and that it must needs raise to the highest pitch the common vice of tyrannies and of democracies, — the relentless crushing of minorities.

For what is this scheme but an organized and undying attempt to establish a theocracy? The Church is not only a Heaven-appointed polity, but an imperishable incarnation of the Personal Deity; the Episcopate is the head-office of his supernatural administration; the sacraments, his occasions of audience and union with his subjects; the priests, the ministers of his court, the directors of its ceremonial, the channel of every petition and every reply. On what terms can the mere secular state live with

Digitized by Google

such a companion? Those who wield the sceptre of the Most High will pay small heed to the baton of the constable. Where the Almighty reigns, what room will there be for the police magistrate? — and where Omniscience directs, for debates in parliament? What *natural* function can fail to undergo eclipse, where the mystic shadow of the *supernatural* traverses the air? True, the Catholic declares his belief in a sort of divine right vested in the civil government, and adopts the language of St. Paul, that "the powers that be are ordained of God"; and, on the strength of this, often professes a loyalty even more profuse than accords with the taste of a people who at times have had to uphold law against kingship. So, in truth, this doctrine of the state is not so lofty as it looks; for while Government and the Church are both called divine, the one is referred to the God of nature, the other to the God of grace; the one is the old mechanism of heathen corruption, the other the new economy of heavenly redemption; the one is for the coercion of enemies to the kingdom of Christ, the other for the guidance of friends; and *who* are enemies, *who* friends, the Church alone can tell. The result is inevitable. The civil power, however extolled as similar in origin and anterior in date, is treated, after all, as subordinate in authority, and bound to place itself and its sword at the disposal of the ecclesiastical order. Its highest honor and perfection is to play the part of censor and avenger, jailer and executioner, for the offended sacerdotal sanctities. Its province is to do the rough work, to undertake the odi-

Digitized by Google

ous necessities, which saintly hearts are too tender to behold, and saintly hands too clean to touch. Spiritual men cannot work at the forge and rivet chains, but only point to the limbs that are to bear them; they cannot teach sword exercise, but only name the crusade where it might serve a holy end; they are unacquainted with worldly finance, but can mention to the magistrate what sum would be useful, and meditate within themselves the purposes to which it shall be applied. Where the *theocratic* pretension prevails, it is idle to suppose that another supreme jurisdiction, resting on a mere human basis, can peacably coexist with it. Professedly destitute of divine direction, undefended from passion and error, how can the inferior function sustain itself against the boundless grasp and grandeur of the superior? Well is it called, in the language of ecclesiastics, the secular "*arm*." As surely as the body obeys the mind, and the nimble hand or heavy fist follows the keenness of thought or the shock of rage, must the temporal power, in every sacerdotal state, sink into the mere instrument of spiritual subtlety and anointed indignation. In proportion as it assumes a truly independent action, and insists on the supremacy of law, the Church considers itself injured, complains of the arrogance of the princes of this world, and puts on that air of hurt innocence which is the favorite disguise of the intensest pride. Hear, for instance, the affecting statement by Father Newman, of the hard lot of the true Church, from the disturbing vicinity of the State.

"The Church is a sovereign and self-sustaining power, in

Digitized by Google

the same sense in which any temporal state is such. She is sufficient for herself; she is absolutely independent in her own sphere; she has irresponsible control over her subjects in religious matters; she makes laws for them of her own authority, and enforces obedience on them as the tenure of their membership in her communion. And you know, in the next place, that the very people who are her subjects, are in another relation the State's subjects, and that those very matters which, in one aspect, are spiritual, in another are secular. The very same persons and the very same things belong to two supreme jurisdictions at once, so that the Church cannot issue any order but it affects the persons and the things of the State, nor can the State issue any order without its affecting the persons and the things of the Church. Moreover, though there is a general coincidence between the principles on which civil and ecclesiastical welfare respectively depend, as proceeding from one and the same God, who has given power to the magistrate as well as to the priest, yet there is no necessary coincidence in their particular application and resulting details, just as the good of the soul is not always the good of the body; and much more is this the case, considering there is no divine direction promised to the State, to preserve it from human passion and human selfishness. Under these circumstances, it is morally impossible that there should not be continual collision, or chance of collision, between the State and the Church; and considering the State has the power of the sword, and the Church has no arms but such as are spiritual, the problem to be considered by us is, how the Church may be able to do her divinely appointed work without molestation or seduction from the State. . . . . If the State would but keep within its own province, it would find the Church its truest ally and best benefactor. She upholds obedience to the magistrate; she recognizes his office as

Digitized by Google

from God; she is the preacher of peace, the sanction of law, the first element of order, and the safeguard of morality, and that without possible vacillation or failure; she may be fully trusted; she is a sure friend, for she is indefectible and undying. But it is not enough for the State that things should be done, unless it has the doing of them; it abhors a double jurisdiction, and what it calls a divided allegiance; *aut Cæsar aut nullus*, is its motto, nor does it willingly accept of any compromise. All power is founded, as it is often said, on public opinion; to allow the existence of a collateral and rival authority, is to weaken its own; and though that authority never showed its presence by collision, but ever concurred and coöperated in the acts of the State, yet the divinity with which the State would fain hedge itself would, in the minds of men, be concentrated on that ordinance of God which has the higher claim to it." — pp. 144 - 146.

Simple people imagine that theocratic claims are harmless, because they refer only to spiritual matters. Cardinal Wiseman assures the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, that he does not covet their Abbey, or begrudge their revenues, or dream of meddling with their congregation. He only wants to be a city missionary, and carry light and consolation into noisome courts and alleys, where the Protestant influence cannot penetrate. He and his episcopal brethren have no other function than to see that the "poor Irish" say their prayers, — that the priests are diligent in their calling, — that the altars have clean cloths, and the broken crucifixes get repaired. They administer in a kingdom that is not of this world: and never can quit their quiet sphere to enter into

Digitized by Google

the affairs of civil life. Human interests and institutions are no more in danger from them than from the angels in heaven. We believe this to be said in perfect good faith, from the Catholic point of view; and for the hour to be true even from the Protestant. But before we concede, upon this plea, the demand of every church to perfect autonomy, — before we turn away with the careless assurance that these clerical matters are no affairs of ours, — it might be well to know how and where the line is to be drawn between temporal and spiritual things. Even in the Reformed churches, this boundary has been a topic of serious dispute. They have all declared that the kingdom they aspired to find was not of this world. Yet Calvin made laws in Geneva, about the dress of brides and the ringing of bells; employed the police to drive the inhabitants to church; shut up the theatres, carried off the fashionable from the masquerade to bridewell, issued warrants against dancing, and rendered it felony to question the dogmas or criticize the preaching of his party. John Knox contended, that "to the Civil Magistrate specially appertained the ordering and reformation of Religion," and the Reformers of Edinburgh, in 1560, made the repeated celebration of the mass punishable with death. The zeal of the Free Church of Scotland for the "crown rights of the Redeemer," (that is, for the irresponsibility of the clergy,) has rendered impossible its friendly alliance with the State. But the very nature of the Protestant system presents a limit to these inconveniences: — First, its doctrine is not sacerdotal; it pretends to no se-

Digitized by Google

cret magic all its own: its appeal is popular; it rouses the conscience of men in masses, instead of practising on their weakness one by one. Secondly, it looks on the world as so lost to God, that no evangelical men can mix themselves much with its affairs. From their spiritual position, they see it across a vast chasm, dividing the opposite poles of destiny: they communicate with it as with an alien, if not a hostile land; where no province lies which it is given them to rule. A realm, therefore, always remains as the proper theatre of temporal sway. They may mark its boundary wrong, but they mark it somewhere. But on the Catholic map of this universe, no such line is found at all; or if it seems to be there, it is but as the shadow of a window-frame, throwing its bar across the sheet, and shifting as the sun of ecclesiastic glory rises or declines. What is temporal in England is spiritual in Spain; what belongs to the kingdoms of this world in the nineteenth century, belonged to the kingdom of heaven in the sixteenth. *De jure*, the divine commission extends to every thing, and might absorb this planet into the Papal state; *de facto*, it includes what it can, and stops where it must. In Paris, the Archbishop celebrates high-mass to orders from an Algerine General, or the Prefect of Police, and bestows his pliant benediction on King or Revolutionary hero. In Turin a law is passed to render ecclesiastics amenable to the civil courts: the high dignitaries of the Church refuse obedience: to the minister of state who proposed the law, they deny, on his last bed, the rites of his religion, and he dies unshriven: Rome supports

Digitized by Google

them in their resistance, and they are now in exile or in prison for preferring their vows to their allegiance. To recede with passive resistance in every step, to advance with active pressure in every open direction, is the policy of a priesthood that never dies. The city and territory of Rome itself exhibit perfectly the result to which the Catholic distinction between the civil and the spiritual departments will reduce itself, when let alone. There, the Pope is Monarch, as well as Primate, and can divide the offices as he will: and there, the temporal functionaries consist of the soldiery and the police. This narrow restriction of the business of the government, which is there brought about by the ascendency of the priesthood, may be elsewhere partially produced by the freedom of the people. The larger the range of life that is left to individual self-direction, the less does there remain for public law to take up, and the more limited will be the work of public rule. During the last thirty years, there has been, till lately, a constant retreat of legislation from its interference with the private will; from the press, from commerce, from litigation, from religion, restrictions have been removed; and the notion has become current, that the State has nothing to do but to protect "body and goods." So long as such an idea retains its influence, and government attempts no more than to stop theft and keep the peace, it can scarce come into collision with any priesthood, and no apprehension of any interference will exist: the two rivals are for the time on different walks, and will not meet. The vicar apostolic does not aspire to be constable, or

Digitized by Google

the lord-lieutenant to perform extreme unction. But the time comes of inevitable reaction against our exaggerated trust in individual self-guidance: fever and pauperism in cities, sullen indigence in the country, excessive work in factories, and juvenile ignorance everywhere, compel us, as a community, to enlarge our aims and embrace some moral ends. Reformatory discipline is attempted in the prison; industrial training in the Poor Law Unions; public grants are made for education; and in Ireland, first, common schools, next, lay colleges, are created under sanction of Parliament. No sooner does this nobler statesmanship begin to take effect, than the politician is told that he is trespassing on the churchman's ground. Who but the priest can undertake the "cure of souls"? Who but he distinguish their medicine from their poison? Who else has a right to care about God's poor? Are the Catholic youth to read history without a spiritual guide at their elbow, to tell them whom to canonize and whom to hate?—and to learn geology without the art of squeezing the epochs within orthodox dimensions?—and to study astronomy without warning from the contumacy of Galileo? No; vested interests of the holiest kind preoccupy the territory of knowledge; no plough shall touch, no harvest insult, its special right of eternal barrenness; it is the τέμενος of a God; only sacred cattle shall graze there; and every intruder be taken to the sacrifice. And so, amid a pageantry and with a secrecy fitted to mystify a deed of darkness, the Irish Episcopate hold a Synod at Thurles; resolve to quench the best light of promise that for

Digitized by Google

many a generation has been lifted above the storm of faction; and surmising, with sure instinct, that what brings the nation to port must bring the priesthood to wreck, they repent of the prospect of repose, and steer the vessel right back into the tempest. The colleges where Protestant and Catholic may meet in the class-room, find that they are made of the same stuff, and feel the blending flames of the same generous enthusiasm; where science cannot be bewildered, or history suborned; where Rome under the Republic may be compared to Rome under the Primacy, and natural politics appear beside the supernatural; where tastes may grow up too heroic for the sacerdotal type of saintship, — are denounced as "godless"; their condemnation is procured from the chair of St. Peter; and the project is set on foot of an exclusive university, where no heretic step shall ever tread, and the mediæval measures of nature and standards of truth shall be supreme. We trust that the government will patiently uphold these colleges; and will so give to the Catholic laity the opportunity of proving, that the ecclesiastical demand upon their obedience may be over-strained; that they will not lay down at the feet of a confessor their duties as parents and as citizens; and that they will put to a practical test Lord Beaumont's regretful assertion, "The Church of Rome admits of no moderate party among the laity; moderation in respect to her ordinances is lukewarmness, and the lukewarm she invariably spews out of her mouth." The crusade commenced against the colleges is now spreading, it is said, to the national schools.

Digitized by Google

When they were first established, it was at the expense of a monopoly previously enjoyed by the members of the Protestant Establishment; and encountering the bitter hostility of the clergy, they were accepted as a boon by the priests. But now the times are changed: through the perseverance of government and the patient energy of Archbishop Whately, the prejudices of his Church have given way; and in the local administration and working of the system, religious parties are becoming equalized. At this symptom, the priesthood begin to show signs of restiveness; to the Catholic imagination, mere equality of privilege has grown flat and lost its charm: and schools for many hundred children are deserted and closed, because the parish priest is not made visitor. And so, in proportion as legislation rises above matters of police, and interposes to check the ills of neglected private obligation, in proportion as it lets the stiffness of a pedantic economy give way a little to the natural humanity, and attempts beneficent prevention, instead of posthumous infliction, — just therefore when it begins to interest the moral feeling of the nation, and attest the growth of higher sentiments, — does the altar appear to bar the way, and the priest declares that all within the rail is his. At the moment and in the act of aspiring to a nobler life, the State is blocked out and spurned as most profane. So has it always been with that proud Church: and so must it ever be. Yet, strange to say, all this may be without fault, without pride, in individuals. It involves no reproach to private believers or to official guides. They are entangled

Digitized by Google

in a net whose threads have shot out fibres into their wills, and penetrated the very substance of their souls. What, indeed, is a man struggling in a Theocracy, but as an insect in the waters of a cataract? He has become part of a mightier element, and must drift whither it will sweep. The arrogance of Rome is something impersonal: it is a function of her organism, a law of her ecclesiastic life. It utters itself alike from the lips of the meekest and the most insolent of her prelates; and whether acting through the energy of Hildebrand, the frivolity of Leo the Tenth, or the saintly virtues of Pius the Fifth, never permits you to forget the "Vicar of Christ." It is in the very atmosphere of her traditions. Like the wind which, in crossing the ocean, distils its surface, taking up the pure water and leaving the brine; these traditions, sweeping over the ages, absorb every glory and omit all the shame: and the temper which they nourish is the accumulated product of a history which forgets no victory and dwells on no defeat. But the social operation of this spirit is not alleviated by its absence, as a personal disposition, from the individual heart. It cannot be untrue to its tendency. A system pledged to solitary and universal empire; engaged to see nothing, hear nothing, upon God's earth, except itself, and the subjects given for its sway; bound to blot out all countries from the map, and all ages from Christian history, which do not bear witness to its unity and majesty, — can make terms with no rival, and endure no equal. Others are free, when only not oppressed; but this feels itself a slave, till it is lord of all.

Digitized by Google

What, then, is the political inference to be drawn from this theocratic character in the Roman Church? Have we been supplying premises for a no-popery conclusion? Not so; — unless the canons of Exeter-Hall logic are henceforth to be the rules of English statesmanship; and a fickle cowardice to take place of that noble courage with which, in many a danger, the English people have dared to be just. Ambition in a sect, and exclusiveness in a creed, are good reasons for not arming them with special power, and trusting them with political privilege: but no reason at all for withholding from them civil equality, or imposing coercive limits on the spontaneous development of their religious institutions. No one thinks of insisting on humility of mind as a condition of the franchise, or denying the alderman's gown except to the shoulders of modest innocence: and as little can we make the temper of a Church a qualifying ground of its civil freedom. The religious liberties which have been won, through the cost and struggle of two centuries, would not be worth a twelvemonth's purchase, were they held on no tenure of immutable justice, but only during *theological good behavior.* Shall it be said that, in passing the great Emancipation Act, the British legislature mistook the nature of the Romish system, and fancied it a meek affair, like Quakerism? Is the Catholic religion so new a thing that its character, obscure in 1829, wakes us into wild surprise in 1850? If there is any thing in history known by the attestation of unbroken experience, if any thing deep-cut into the memorials of British life by the graver of the nation's

Digitized by Google

resolve and agony, surely it is the lofty pretensions and the sleepless patience of the Church "one and indivisible." Had this been a secret twenty years ago, the removal of Catholic disabilities would lose not only every noble, but every respectable feature; and would be degraded from an act of legislative rectitude to the level of a defeated bargain, or an extorted boon. But it was no secret: the repeated Parliamentary debates, the protracted controversies between the established and the disabled communions, had long brought out every feature of the case; and nothing was done but with open eyes. It was fully intended to take all the risks of a just course, and to leave to the Roman Catholics the undisturbed advantage of any arrogance or weakness, any policy or success, any mitre, pallium, or title, for which room might be found within the limits of the law. We have seen nothing to convince us that the appointment of the new Catholic hierarchy involves the violation, or even the slightest straining, of the law: and it may now be fairly presumed that Mr. Bowyer's pamphlet, in which the legal aspects of the case are strikingly presented, — is felt to be unanswerable.* The Papal brief, then, is valid for its end; the bishops it appoints are already *there*, lawfully accost-

* Sir E. Sugden's opinion has since been given, against the legality of the Papal procedure, so far as the *publication* of the Letter Apostolic is concerned. The offence, however, is against a law which has been stripped of its penalties: and is apparently constituted, not by the substantive act of creating and allocating the new hierarchy, but by the formal error of publishing the instrument through which this is done. If so, prosecution may touch some *person*, but cannot affect the *thing*.

Digitized by Google

ed by their titles, and exercising supervision over the clergy of their dioceses; — no prosecution can disturb them; — if they are to be deprived, it must be by act of Parliament; but what could be the provisions of such an act? Is it to prevent the Roman Catholics from having bishops? — to say that their Church must cease to be episcopal? This would be tantamount to an absolute proscription of their religion; which, as we have shown, is essentially a polity, and, apart from the prelatical element, can have no existence. It is a mockery of toleration to permit people to believe in a divine corporation, and then refuse them the corporate officers. Or is it to allow the bishops, but to make restrictive rules as to what they shall be *called?* This being the most simply vexatious course, enough to show a petty temper, not enough to touch the distribution of real power, is most likely, we fear, to be thought soothing to the English clergy, and to be offered to them as adapted to their taste. It were better, we think, to leave them unsoothed than to bring British legislation into contempt. Or, finally, is it to allow both bishops and their names, but to control their nomination from Rome, and in some way insist that their origin be indigenous, and their dependence insular? On political grounds, this is the only measure for which a plausible excuse can be urged. It might be plausibly said to the Roman Catholics, "You shall have every liberty enjoyed by any subject of these realms: no one advantage shall Methodist or Baptist possess over you: whatever the largest exigencies of religious freedom have been defined by your countrymen to

Digitized by Google

include, shall be secured to you. If you are content to stand on an equality with them, no prejudice shall disturb your position; but your demands go beyond theirs; no sect before ever asked to have a body of ruling officers distributed over the country, owing their appointment and their spiritual allegiance to a foreign power. If the Pope should fall under the ascendency of cabinets unfriendly to England, what security have we that unpatriotic influences may not be poured through the channels of power, thus ramifying to our poorest population? Insulate yourselves, like other Nonconformists, and your faith shall be absolutely free. But at present you require, under the name of *religion*, a privilege which every one else would esteem *political*."

This argument, however, is not applicable as against the admission of the new hierarchy. For, if you sweep that hierarchy away, you only reinstate the Vicars Apostolic, whose Papal dependence is even more close, and more open to the objection urged, than that of the provincial episcopate. Must we go further, then, and cut off the organic connection with Rome in every form? Desirable or not, the thing is simply impossible. Without the living connection with their Head, the members of the Catholic Church cannot subsist as parts of a spiritual body: and to require them — either by electing their bishops or by vesting their allocation in an English High-priest — to form themselves into a detached Church, is only to insist on their becoming apostates. No doubt, they ask more than satisfies the Dissenter: but it is not optional with them to do this

Digitized by Google

or to take the humbler place. They cannot shut up within the four seas a Church, whose universality, whose identity with entire Christendom, whose bounden allegiance to the chair of St. Peter, is the prime article of their belief. They must either enjoy, then, this larger liberty than others, or they must have none at all. While their altars remain open, and hundreds of priests daily appear at matins and vespers, no choice remains but between open and clandestine communication with Rome; and if there be contingent political danger in a foreign connection, that danger is not likely to be lessened when the correspondence is maintained, in the style of a conspiracy, between an offended Pontiff and a disaffected English and Irish people.

With our eye, then, full upon the inevitable tendencies of the Romish system; with the conviction that it generates a state of mind at variance with the English standard of civil and religious liberty; with the certain knowledge, that the equal and tolerant treatment it receives it will never, in its place and day of power, be willing to reciprocate, — we yet say to our fellow-countrymen, Be just, and fear not; put not your trust in coercive laws; dream not that divine truth can be bought with the coin of human injury; be resolved, if ever you have to defend your own rights from encroachment, to enter the field without reproach. The free mind and the large heart, in yourselves and your children, will be a surer charm against the priest and the canon law, than preventive statutes or an outcry for the Queen's supremacy.

Digitized by Google

And this last phrase, this "Queen's supremacy," brings us to the real source of most of the zeal, and of all the confusion, so conspicuous in the present anti-Papal excitement. We have hitherto treated the question as if it seriously lay between the Roman Catholic body and the British nation. But the real quarrel is felt to be between the Papal and the Anglican headships, and between the rival Episcopates proceeding from them and now existing side by side. Whoever sees, in the vehemence of the storm now raging, a comforting proof of the Protestant spirit of the English Establishment, puts a very false reading on the signs of the times. We do not hesitate to say, that, in one aspect, it is the strongest symptom which has appeared since the time of the Stuarts of the profoundly sacerdotal * character of our Church, and its intense alienation from the Reformed religion. For whence, and on what occasion, is this mighty outburst of indignation? Does it break forth on the appearance of some devastating *heresy*, and take some glorious and threatened *truth* under the protection of its enthusiasm? Not at all; no alarming doctrine, no insidious book, no new missionary of error, has been introduced into the land; the people believe to-day what they believed three months ago; no fresh agency, not so

* Throughout this paper we use the word "Priest," not loosely, as merely equivalent to "Minister," but in the proper hieratic sense, to denote a person who interposes himself between man and God, and claims to be the indispensable medium of their effectual communication. This idea must be carried into all the kindred words, "sacerdotal," "pontifical"; and, with the needful modification, into the word "altar" as opposed to "communion-table."

Digitized by Google

much as a single priest, has been added to the powers of "perversion" existing before. Nay, the experience of seventeen years, during which the so-called "Anglican" movement has been going on, has shown with what patience every distinctive feature of the Pontifical creed and discipline might be contemplated; how complacently bishops could negotiate with these, how meekly endure the new grandeur they conferred, so long as the oracle came from Oxford, not from Rome, and the apostolic glory, exposed to no competition, enjoyed the monopoly at home. Nearly two thousand clergymen passed silently into the English Church, to teach every thing Roman except the Primacy of Rome; and the services of this powerful ambuscade against the march and fortresses of the Reformation, are quietly accepted in every diocese of the land: twelve Romish priests do but change their title and their dress, and the whole bench of bishops is convulsed. Why is this? and what means the language in which the change is denounced as an "aggression," a "usurpation," an "invasion"? "Usurpation" is the violent seizure of power from the sole rightful possessor; and when such an act is charged, it implies that the accuser is smarting under the feelings of *injured legitimacy*. The anger of the clergy arises from their holding the very same doctrine with their opponents; viz. that on the same spot there cannot be more than one bishop; that, if two appear, one or the other must be a pretender, and must be got rid of, unless both are to become ridiculous; that the very nature of their office is lost if the title be dis-

Digitized by Google

tributed. If the episcopal form of church government were held simply as the best human contrivance for maintaining the order of a Christian community, there would be no conceivable reason why one denomination after another should not be thought free to adopt it; and those who admired it would naturally rejoice to see their own judgment and preference confirmed by the concurrence and practice of other bodies of disciples. That the opposite feeling prevails, convicts our Church of holding Episcopacy as a supernatural institution, and of claiming the very same perpetual apostleship which is maintained by the Romish theory. In a new bishop is seen, not a superintendent of a separate class of religious societies, but a rival assertor of the same indivisible authority. What now does that authority include? The exclusive possession of all the means of grace; the sole power of transmitting the Holy Spirit; the nomination of trustees for the divine sacraments, of the stewards of absolution and the remission of sins. The sacerdotalism of the English Church is as absolute as that of the Roman. It matters little whether the sacraments be more or fewer; whether their *modus operandi* be a little more subjective or a little more objective; whether the right to absolve be used with the healthy or only with the sick, — so long as a ritual purification of human nature is pronounced indispensable, and the patent-right to effect it is conceded by a *jus divinum* to a certain body of men, the whole mischief of the Papal scheme remains. The disconnection from Rome simply renders the evil provin-

Digitized by Google

cial instead of universal; but the malady, by becoming insular instead of continental, does not abate its danger. In every form and in every degree, mediatorial persons intrusted with mediatorial substances, and standing with supernatural incantations between man and God, are perilous to the well-being of the State. They occupy a position above the law: they constitute a polity distinct from the civil organization, and are never content till it is subordinated to their ends. No statesman can expect ecclesiastic peace till every trace of priestly doctrine is removed from the formularies of the Church, as it already is from the heart of the nation; and the sacramental offices retained from the Pontifical Church be reduced to the simply memorial rites of the Helvetic Reformation. No clergy can expect free action in alliance with the State, so long as they claim functions involving the irresponsible supremacy of their order. On the theological evidence of the sacerdotal system we pronounce no opinion, but of its political bearings there can scarcely be a doubt: — it disqualifies any religion for being the *established* religion. It would be difficult for any government to take the twelve Apostles into its pay, were they living in Europe now. Their miraculous gifts and the movements of their inspiration would spurn the conditions imposed by a Chancellor of the Exchequer or a Minister of Public Instruction. Parliamentary committees on their missionary expenses, and blue-book reports on their χαρισματα, would seem an intolerable indignity: Mr. Roebuck would be a thorn in the flesh, and Mr. Bright a messenger of Satan to

Digitized by Google

buffet them. It cannot be otherwise with apostolic men, like Henry of Exeter and the holy Incumbent of St. Barnabas. Charged in this world with a divine mission, they are above being judged by man's judgment; and, before the tribunal of the nation, feel like Christ before the bar of Pilate. Trustees of a supernatural endowment, and in its disposal acting as organs of the Holy Ghost, they can make no terms with secular men, who think, like Simon Magus, "that the gift of God may be purchased with money." Agents of a heavenly polity for ruling the souls of men, they are bound, by paramount obligation, to guard and administer the precise form of dogma committed to them; receiving it pure from the Church, and neither judging it themselves nor suffering others to judge it. This class of ecclesiastics are very provoking to the statesman. They appear perverse and obstinate. He cannot moderate them; with a nucleus of incomprehensible pride covered by a surface of unctuous meekness, they slip through his fingers, and pursue their course. His canons of reason and theirs are hopelessly at variance; — their respective modes of thought never meet; and the longer they negotiate, the less do they agree. The statesman, less enduring than the ecclesiastic, and wielding the keen instruments of decisive coercion, grows angry, and cuts short the controversy by an ultimatum of obedience or exclusion. He can do nothing else, without betraying the best interests of the nation. Yet we must say, that in being subjected to his ban, and held up to the indignation of the people, the Anglicans are very

Digitized by Google

hardly used. It is a shameful tyranny to retain their doctrine in the Prayer-book, and then abuse them for believing it; to bind them by solemn engagement to a sacerdotal theory, and then lose all temper when they reduce it to practice; to say to them, as each enters his office, "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained," and then be offended at their lofty airs. It is undeniable that the sacramental and priestly doctrine embodied in the Anglican movement is fully authorized by the formularies of the Church, and that no clergyman who disbelieves it can have given a veracious "assent and consent," "willingly and *ex animo*," "to all things contained in them." There is no more ground for charging dishonesty on the Anglican party than on the Evangelical. Each finds its justification in a part — neither in the whole — of the Liturgy and Articles of the Church; but the Anglicans being in the minority, and tending in a direction with which the nation does not sympathize, are treated with opprobrium as traitors to the faith. We believe them to be the most pernicious men of all within the compass of the Church; but also the most sincere, the most learned, the most self-denying; the most faithful, intellectually and morally, to the ecclesiastical training which has been provided for them. Had it been possible for them to win over the majority of the nation to their views, and had logical considerations any weight with the tribunal of popular opinion, they would have been regarded, not as the insidious corrupters of the Church, but as the consistent restor-

Digitized by Google

ers of its characteristic principles. Their fate is determined by historical combinations, rather than by any essential principle of justice. But in sacrificing them, let no wrong be done: let the act be one, not of disgrace upon persons, but of preference for a principle: let the expulsion be, of priesthood from the Prayer-book, not of priests from the altars they have served. In driving them to the Vatican, the Church which has nurtured them in Romish tastes, committed them to Romish pretension, and shut them up in a University the very focus of mediæval revival, owes them some reparation: nor could she present a more fitting apology than the erasure from her own system of every line that has misled these erring sons.

Unless this be done, and the State decisively refuses to recognize the Church as a *supernatural* corporation, the evil will perpetually recur. The demand for ecclesiastical supremacy and independence, however dangerous, is irresistibly reasonable, if the Church be the holder of a commission, and the performer of a work which no human power can touch. Concede this claim, and the national control becomes a manifest tyranny; and if the control be optional, the claim must be denied. Hence the emphasis with which all "Churchmen" dwell on the treasure of "dogma and sacraments" consigned to the guardianship of the Church; and on the right, thence arising, of a lofty bearing towards the temporal power.

"The State claims the allegiance of its subjects on the ground of the tangible benefits of which it is the instrument towards them. Its strength lies in this undeniable fact, and

Digitized by Google

they endure and they maintain its coercion and its laws, because the certainty of this fact is ever present to their minds. What mean the array and the pomp which surround the sovereign? The strict ceremonial, the minute etiquette, the almost unsleeping watchfulness which eyes her every motion, which follows her into her garden and her chamber, which notes down every shade of her countenance, and every variation of her pulse? Why do her soldiers hover about her, and officials line her anterooms, and cannon and illumination carry forward her progresses among the people? Is this all a mockery? Is it done for nothing? Surely not; in her is centred the order, the security, the happiness of a great people. And, in like manner, the Church must be the guardian of a fact; she must have something to produce, she must have something to do. It is not enough to be keeper of even an inspired book; for there is nothing to show that her protection of it is necessary at this day. The State might fairly commit its custody to the art of printing, and dissolve an institution whose occupation was no more. She must do that, in order to have a meaning, which otherwise cannot be done; which she alone can do. She must have a benefit to bestow, in order to be worth her existence; and the benefit must be a fact which no one can doubt about. It must not be an opinion, or matter of opinion, but a something which is like a first principle, which may be taken for granted, — a foundation indubitable and irresistible. In other words, she must have a dogma and sacraments; it is a *dogma and sacraments*, and nothing else, which can give meaning to a Church, or sustain her against the State; for by these are meant certain facts or acts which are special instruments of spiritual good to those who receive them. As we do not gain the benefits of civil society unless we submit to its laws and customs, so we do not gain the spiritual blessings

Digitized by Google

which the Church has to bestow upon us unless we receive her dogmas and her sacraments." — *Newman's Lectures*, p. 178.

This is the pretended basis of the English, no less than of the Roman Church. The pretence is palpably false; all consistent teaching being utterly lost, the sacraments having become the centres of heretical disputes, and the inconsistencies of the formularies laid open to public exposure. The Act of Uniformity, it is now confessed, enforces a heterogeneous congeries of theological propositions with no organic unity, held together by no higher bond than the printer's frame of types, and incapable of coexisting in any mind of logical grasp and moral earnestness to use it; and the only uniformity which it secures among the clergy, beyond the weekly monotony upon the ear, is that of invariable self-contradiction, of partial unveracity, and bitter mutual aversions. Nevertheless, absurd as the pretence is, of a supernatural trust of dogma in the keeping of our ecclesiastics, it has not been relieved of its mischief in being bereft of its truth. It operates powerfully against the most salutary and moderate reforms. It refuses to recognize the fact, impressed on the whole course of history and necessitated by the very constitution of the human mind, that religious faith cannot be made immutable except under the humiliating condition of universal ignorance and apathy; but requires, from time to time, new intellectual forms for its sincere expression. It affects to shrink from every doctrinal modification, as the breach of an eternal trust, and, to evade the confession of fallibility, will

Digitized by Google

repeal nothing even of what has passed into desuetude or disgust. This hollow profession of an unreal unity and fixedness most unfavorably influences the character and culture of the clergy. The national life of England has been particularly productive of fresh and eccentric varieties of religious activity, which the sturdy realism and moral energy of her people have not permitted to spend themselves in speculation or to sleep in books, but have pushed foward to take the command of events. From the Precisians of Queen Elizabeth's reign to the Free Church believers of Queen Victoria's, there has been a series of intellectual movements connected with religion, so important as to color the whole complexion of our history. But as these have, for the most part, been suffered to take place *outside* the Church, they are not in favor with the clergy; and whatever part of the infection of change has spread at times to the interior, is so disturbing to the theory of a doctrinal stewardship, that the periods marked by it lie under disgrace. The clerical habit, therefore, is to ignore the entire existence of Nonconformity; to treat it precisely as the Pope now treats the established schism; to walk through history like a coxcomb through a ball-room, eying his nearest neighbors as if he had never seen them, and looking another way when an inconvenient acquaintance approaches. By rights, he appears to think, such people have no business to be there at all; *he* would never have allowed it, had it rested with him: but the admissions were settled at St. Stephen's; and with such a miscellaneous committee of manage-

Digitized by Google

ment as that, one cannot be surprised at any thing. Often, indeed, it may well happen that the clergyman has only an obscure and hearsay belief in the reality of Dissenters. His father, the rector of a country place, "never allowed them in his parish." At Oxford, the phenomenon was invisible, and never mentioned. In his studies, the youth had never been referred to any Nonconformist books, though, in getting up the history of heresies, he had heard of some great discomfitures inflicted on them by orthodox bishops. And now he is curate in a village, from which, a month before he came, the only Dissenter — a Baptist cobbler — had removed, because there was no school but the "National," and he would not let his children learn the Church Catechism. And so, of the stirring religious life of the conventicle, which gathers into it so much of the energy of the middle classes, and still more of the *unreligious* and alienated life of the classes below this, the academic Churchman knows nothing. Unless his lot be cast in a large town, he lives in a social world little disturbed by the new spirit of the present century, and where he may cherish the ideas of an obsolete generation. Nor is it only in his narrow view of his own time that the professional perversion is seen: it corrupts still more conspicuously his estimates of the past, and generates historical tastes dishonorable to men of English birth. Dreaming of dogmatic unity as the indispensable mark of the Church, and finding no clear and steady traces of it in the last three centuries, nor much pretence of it, except in the Romish and Anglican communions, he carries all his

Digitized by Google

admirations up, along the narrow path of Episcopacy, into the mediæval period, and through it to the dreary ages when ecclesiastic consolidation took up the crumbling Empire of the West. The august image of an indivisible Christendom, instructed by the fathers, represented by the Councils, ruled by the Head of the Church, accompanies and fascinates him; and we know of no preconception so powerful as this to pervert all history, to spoil all purity and manliness of taste, and to produce a state of mind uncongenial with what is noblest in the actual life of this nineteenth century. He sees, upon a writer the most mean and tedious, the *imprimatur* of ecclesiastical adoption, and wastes upon him the reverence due to thought and genius. He allows dogmatic grounds to determine all his judgments of human character and literary merit: the silliness of Epiphanius escapes him, lest a needful witness be lost: for fear of encouraging Jovinan, Jerome's fanatic passions must have their way: the apprehension of Arius makes every thing in Athanasius "great": and the presence of Pelagius excuses Augustine's persecuting zeal. The bald grossness of the Ambrosian hymns is extolled for simplicity and grandeur; and the conceits of Marbod and Hildebert for poetic richness and fertility. Anselm becomes the model of a philosopher; Aquinas, of a theologian; and Bernard, of a saint. Kings and emperors are estimated, not by their capacity and virtues, but by their orthodoxy: Constantine, the murderer of all his kindred, Theodosius, who desolated the streets of Antioch and Thessalonica with frightful and

Digitized by Google

almost gratuitous massacres, are applauded as "great," because they were prodigal to the clergy, and merciless to heretics. In every contest between the ecclesiastical and temporal power, the "Churchman's" sympathies go with the former, and, without regard to any merits of the dispute, he visibly glories in the abasement of the crown before the mitre; it is a triumph to him, that to the family of Valentinian the Second, and to the Emperor himself, because he was an Arian, every church in Milan was denied, and from the Basilica the chant of St. Ambrose, ceaseless by night or day, defied the soldiers of the prince; and he loves to read how Becket extorted penance from the king. But above all, he holds in greatest antipathy the whole system of influences under which the constitutional liberties of modern England have been matured. The Reformation under Luther and Melancthon, Calvin and Zwingle, is contemptuously disclaimed as a vulgar insurrection of private judgment; so that any sympathy with Continental Protestantism has long become the recognized mark of a Dissenter. The whole cluster of modern churches is swept scornfully away, with the pedantic remark, that they are only a reproduction by ignorant men of the ancient heresies: over which orthodoxy, supernaturally triumphant once, will return in full tide again. English Churchmen describe the Presbyterianism of the North, as "that form of schism which is established in Scotland." New literary idols are set up even among the writers of their own communion, and many of the older potentates dethroned. Of the elder divines, the

Digitized by Google

High-Churchmen are alone in favor, Andrewes and Laud, Jackson and Cosin; and of the more recent, the nonjurors awaken the strongest interest, Brett, and Ken, and Beveridge.

The praises of such men as Ridley and Parkhurst, who would have brought Zurich and London into the fraternity of a common reformation, are no longer heard. Tillotson, having proposed a scheme of large-hearted comprehension, is regarded as a traitor to the primacy which he adorned. And in proportion as any divine has enlarged his range as a theologian on the side of philosophy, he is set aside, with Cudworth and Clarke, as a miserable latitudinarian. In regard to every political struggle by which the nation has obtained fresh guaranties of civil liberty or made a new step in religious toleration, it is fashionable for "good Churchmen" in our days to sympathize with the doctrines of servility and oppression. Clarendon himself could find no fault with the modern clerical view of "the Great Rebellion"; and the settlement in 1688 is regarded as the ill-omened commencement of that fatal series of changes by which, through the removal of tests, Parliament has become a medley of heresies, and the Church laid prostrate before Quakers, Papists, and Socinians. In our literature, there is scarce a name venerable to the popular ear, which is ever mentioned by this class of men without a gloss of disparagement. Milton, unfortunately, was neither orthodox nor prelatist. Locke set the fashion of that presumptuous reliance on experience, which is the root of all infidelity; and brought into vogue that sophistical "toleration,"

Digitized by Google

which amounts to "total indifference to all objective truth." Bunyan is abandoned to the coarser imagination of the Nonconformist, while Thomas-à-Kempis is fitter for the pocket of an Anglican. The world could better have spared Adam Smith than have suffered the dreadful blights of Political Economy. This sort of taste, which for twenty years has been fostered in the University Churchman, sets him down as a stranger in this trading, bustling, practical England. He looks with simple alarm and aversion on the characteristic life of the age, its vast material development, its irresistible and crushing growth of mechanism, physical and human, its swarming towns, its distracting mills, its noisy agitations, its teeming press, its chaos of beliefs and unbeliefs. In the days of Queen Bess, it was not thought unfitting for religious men to share in the national pride awakened by expanding prosperity and power; but in our time an ecclesiastical cant has arisen against all the marking features and moral results of the immense productive power and commercial complications of the empire. We are not blind to the embarrassing social problems springing out of these conditions; but there is no solution to be found in sneering at the politics of Manchester, and treating the West Riding as a pandemonium. When the appointed guides of the people despair, it is a confession of incapacity. In these smoky towns, too, under the very shadow of the mill, they have but to deal with men, each with a heart in his bosom and a faculty of thought in his soul. If danger there be, it is that, though the new forces and enlarged quantities of society be not in

Digitized by Google

themselves too strong, the old Church provisions for directing and organizing them are quite too weak, and may be shattered and humbled in the attempt. In reading the writings of modern "Churchmen," nothing strikes us so forcibly as the intense antipathy to every thing distinctively national. The Lectures of Father Newman abound in bitter sarcasms on the "free-born, self-dependent, animal mind of the Englishman," who will have no "restrictions put upon *grace*, when he has thrown open trade, removed disabilities, abolished monopolies, taken off agricultural protection, and enlarged the franchise." These Lectures are indeed written by a Roman Catholic; but they were addressed to Anglicans, and by one who has superlative skill in the selection of topics adapted to their tastes. The following passage is a fair specimen of the ecclesiastical feeling towards English life, described under the theological *sobriquet*, "the world."

"Were it to my present purpose to attack the principles and proceedings of the world, of course it would be obvious for me to retort upon the cold, cruel, selfish system, which this supreme worship of comfort, decency, and social order necessarily introduces; to show you how the many are sacrificed to the few, the poor to the wealthy, how an oligarchical monopoly of enjoyment is established far and wide, and the claims of want, and pain, and sorrow, and affliction, and guilt, and misery are practically forgotten. But I will not have recourse to the commonplaces of controversy while I am on the defensive. All I would say to the world is, Keep your theories to yourself, do not inflict them upon the sons of Adam everywhere; do not measure heaven

Digitized by Google

and earth by views which are in a great degree insular, and never can be philosophical and Catholic. You do your work, perhaps, in a more business-like way, compared with ourselves, but we are immeasurably more tender, and gentle, and angelic. We come to poor human nature as the angels of God, and you as policemen. Look at your poor-houses, lunatic asylums, and prisons; how perfect are their externals, what skill and ingenuity appear in their structure, economy, and administration; they are as decent, and bright, and calm as what our Lord seems to name them,— dead men's sepulchres. Yes! they have all the world can give, all but life; all but a heart. Yes! you can hammer up a coffin; you can plaster a tomb; you are nature's undertakers; you cannot build it a home. You cannot feed it, or heal it; it lies, like Lazarus, at your gate, full of sores. You see it gasping and panting with privations and penalties; and you sing to it, you dance to it, you show it your picture-books, you let off your fire-works, you open your menageries. Shallow philosophers! Is this mode of going on so winning and persuasive, that we should imitate it?"— *Lectures*, p. 209.

This invective against all *secular* forms of compassion towards want and suffering addresses itself to a feeling exceedingly lively, we fear, among the priesthood of the English Church. They certainly are free from the lecturer's reproach; for who ever found them singing and dancing to poor human nature, plying it with picture-books, or even, to any great extent, with the alphabet? Whatever has been done of this profane kind is really not to be laid at their door. They were no partners to Joseph Lancaster's zeal for spelling, apart from regeneration; and had it depended on them, not an unbaptized

Digitized by Google

man, from the Cheviot to the Channel, would, to this hour, have been able to sign his name. They were guiltless of abetting Raikes's project for Sabbath-breaking schools; and, if they could, would have kept the precincts of every place of worship pure from the sacrilegious presence of slate or copy-book. Dr. Birkbeck did not complain of any rivalry from them in the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes; nor are the cheap concerts, and zoölogical gardens, which are so painful to the son of St. Philip Neri, peculiarly clerical establishments. There were chaplains to the prisons — those whited sepulchres — before the time of Howard and Elizabeth Fry; the places were perhaps quite as sepulchral, but they were certainly less white. In fact, lay the poor Lazarus at the gate of the Romish and of the English priest, and what is the difference? The one will confess him; the other, reading to him the service for the visitation of the sick, will "move him to confess"; and both will give him absolution. Neither of these "comes to poor human nature" exactly "like a policeman"; neither of them, we devoutly hope, is much "like the angels of God": but whatever the one is, the other is surely not dissimilar; and the lecturer's sacerdotal sarcasms against the methods of secular benevolence and social administration express the spirit and temper of them both. The only difference is, that the priestly element is less ascendant in the English than in the Roman system, and that our Church is politically too dependent on the nation not to be distinctly affected by national sentiments. Instead, therefore, of absolutely

Digitized by Google

blocking them out at their origin, after the fashion of an Austrian or Bavarian priesthood, our clergy (notwithstanding honorable exceptions) obstruct their course and hang upon their rear, and follow with antipathy the movements of a generous lay sentiment which it is their place to guide with sympathy. It is undeniable that into every social improvement, every extension of mixed education, every removal of religious exclusion, which has characterized the last half-century, the Church has been reluctantly dragged. They have been found *against* the changes which the prevailing feeling of the country, which Parliament, which statesmen, which history, must regard as the best features of the age. Were this a truly devout conservatism, the enthusiasm of self-devotion arresting the downward course of a degenerate time, we could joyfully do homage to their fatal zeal in clinging to the untenable. But who can pretend to discover in it any trace of the prophet's quick instinct for good and ill? — who deny that its only steady principle has been the priest's tenacity of threatened power? If there is a spot in the empire which may fairly be regarded as the inmost shrine of the Church, authorized to express its genius and will, that spot is Oxford. Some century and a quarter ago, John Wesley was Fellow of Lincoln College and Greek Lecturer there. With a few companions, recoiling, like himself, from the profligate habits of the place, he took to heart the appeals of Law's "Serious Call," and resolved to live with the invisible realities which with others served but for a stately dream or a mocking jest.

Digitized by Google

In the cold midnight, beneath the truthful sky, he struggled for a faith worthy of so great a sight. He prayed without ceasing; he fasted in secret; he passed the mystery on from his own heart to the souls of others; and led the saintly life with less offence to creed and prejudice, than almost any devotee in history. The son of a High-Church rector, he could not be charged with unsacramental doctrine or Nonconformist sympathies; he denied the Christian baptism of Dissenters, and drove them from the communion as unregenerate. He duly proved his spirit of self-sacrifice by preferring a mission to the Indians of Georgia to a parochial provision at home, and the fraternity of the poor Hernnhuter to the aristocratic priesthood of England. The sequel is well known; how he took up the labors, while others boasted of the privileges, of Apostleship; civilized whole counties; lifted brutal populations into communities of orderly citizens and consistent Christians; and in grandeur of missionary achievement rivalled the most splendid successes of Christendom. With what eye did the Church, as the Mother, and the University, as the Nurse, of so much greatness, look upon his career? Did they avail themselves of his gifts, bless Heaven for the timely mission of such rare graces, and heap on him the work which he was so eager to do, and they so much needed to get done? Did they found an order to bear his name and propagate his activity? He coveted their support; and so clung to their alliance, that seldom has a strong enthusiasm been combined with such moderation. But in their most

Digitized by Google

favorable mood, they did but stare and stand aloof. It was in vain to look to the clergy for their help; he was driven to a lay organization, and even a lay ministry; the Wesleyan Chapel became the rival, instead of the auxiliary, of the Parish Church; and the most loyal of all popular religious bodies was absolutely repulsed from conformity. When the leaders, with a cart for their pulpit and a field for their church, provoked the vices and passions they denounced, and were stoned and carried off to prison, the rector was less likely to be their intercessor than their judge. And in Wesley's college days, where the premonition of his religious movement was distinctly given, he met no wisdom and affection to protect him from the scorn of the learned and the laughter of the rich. The Apostle of popular piety was repudiated and contemned.

Early in 1829, the Duke of Wellington became convinced that the fit moment had arrived for terminating the contest between the British Government and the Catholic Association, by removing the political disabilities affecting nearly one third of the subjects of the empire. Sir Robert Peel had represented in Parliament the University of Oxford, and on adopting the resolution to act in conjunction with the Duke of Wellington, resigned his seat, and asked from his constituents a verdict upon his new opinions. It was a significant election. Had the attachment to a tolerant policy been strong, the conversion to it of the most practical statesmen of the day would have been readily accepted as an assurance that state expediency, instead of hindering, impera-

Digitized by Google

tively demanded its application. Had the spirit of exclusiveness been weak, — a mere waning tradition ready to die out, — there was an unexampled opportunity of discarding it without danger, if not without reproach; for the Universities were expressly excepted from the new sphere of honor open to the Catholics. The result is not forgotten. The confidence of Oxford was transferred from Sir Robert Peel to Sir Robert H. Inglis: and a disinterested testimony borne against all concession of religious liberty.

But perhaps nothing else could be expected from such an institution, — the great guardian of our Reformed Church. Perhaps the traditions of 1687 were too vividly preserved, and the tower of Magdalene was too visible a monument of danger from Roman Catholic aggression, to permit the least negotiation with so insidious a faith. Under the tyranny of James the Second, had not Popish principles been imported into the place, been taught by the Fellows, proclaimed in the chapel, and occupied the Bishop's throne? And must not a body which had carried on a contest with a king in such a cause be jealous of its Protestant repute; and, having withstood the Declaration of Indulgence, protest against the Act of Emancipation? Let the answer be given by events. Four years after the election of 1829, began to issue from Oxford a series of publications, in which the whole Protestant theory of religion was assailed from its foundation; the Reformation treated as a sacrilegious rebellion; the Continental churches disowned; the Patristic theology declared authoritative; private judgment solemnly renounced; and

Digitized by Google

Christianity rested on Apostolic succession, sacerdotal prerogative, and sacramental grace. It seemed a bold undertaking to spring up in the very fortress of the national Protestantism; the rash prowess, perhaps, of solitary and miscalculating zeal, secure of instant rebuke from the spirit of the place. Time has undeceived us. So congenial did the Academic influences prove, that the leaders in the movement appeal to their success, as too wonderful for natural persuasion, and giving visible evidence of miracle. Not undergraduates alone worked into the fervors of romance; but fellows, tutors, preachers, and professors joined the Catholic revival; prelates were soon found among their ranks; and, were any one curious to compare the creed of Parker with that of Wilberforce, it might remain doubtful whether episcopacy in Oxford was much more Protestant in 1850 than in 1687. At all events, hundreds of clergymen have learned, in colleges speaking the voice of the Church, principles which throw contempt on our revolt from Rome, and on all that we have won from the sixteenth century to the present hour. Oxford, so resolute against the Pope's Catholics, could gently nurse her own. Sacerdotal claims were dangerous only in rival and in foreign hands. She fosters them against the English nation; but keeps them all within the English Church. Thus have three opportunities been given to the greatest of our ecclesiastical institutions, to declare itself in relation to the deepest national interests, — Methodism, Toleration, Sacerdotalism. It pronounces against any day of Pentecost for the people; against any relaxation of dis-

Digitized by Google

abling laws on account of religion; and encourages priestly pretension in its own communion.

The operation of this spirit is the more to be deplored, because it determines the temper of the higher classes of English society. Politicians, we are aware, are accustomed to calculate on the ascendency over the clergy of lay, and especially of aristocratic influences. And no doubt the system of patronage, and the opinions of wealthy and powerful parishioners, cannot be without their effect on the clergyman. But in quiet times, and in the long run, the mental action, we are persuaded, is prevailingly in the opposite direction. The squire is usually a man of less activity of thought than the curate or the vicar; and, beyond a certain range of political judgments to which he is pledged by habit and profession, is not likely to resist the steady pressure of sentiment from the most intelligent and venerated authority in his vicinity. The remark applies still more strongly to the ladies of his family. Hence, whatever tendency exists actively in the clergy, impresses itself on the great body of the country gentlemen and noble houses; and should the tendency be unfortunately in contradiction to the predominant bias of the nation, dangerous social divisions are produced. The aristocratic contempt felt towards Nonconformists and their institutions is mischievously enhanced by this cause. The picture which Mr. Miall draws, in the following sentences, of clerical influence in the rural districts, is not free from exaggeration; and, in referring the evil to state endowment, he appears to us to mistake the nature of

Digitized by Google

the malady; but we presume he expresses the prevalent feeling of the Dissenters, and must be received as an unexceptionable witness to their occasional experience.

"This legalized ecclesiasticism, claiming exclusive right to dispense God's Gospel to the people of these realms, and casting contempt on all unauthorized effort, puts itself into jealous and active antagonism to the Christian zeal which sends forth into our neglected towns, and amongst our stolid peasantry, laborers of various denominations, for the purpose of rescuing immortal souls from a cruel and fatal bondage. Every one familiarly acquainted with our rural districts can bear witness to facts in proof of this position. Go into almost any village in the empire, and set yourself down there to win souls to Christ; and your bitterest foe, your most energetic and untiring opponent, will prove to be the clergyman, — the state-appointed minister of Jesus Christ. The very first symptoms of spiritual life which show themselves among his parishioners — social meetings for prayer, anxious inquiries for the way of salvation, eager attention to the proclamations of the Gospel — will attract his vigilant notice, and provoke his severest censure. The thing is so common, and has been so from time immemorial, as to cease to excite surprise. Would you stir up in men's minds serious concern respecting their highest interests, the parish 'priest' will be sure to cross your path at every step. Gather around you the children of the poor, to instil into their young and susceptible hearts the truths of the Gospel, and instantly their parents are threatened with a forfeiture of all claims upon parochial charity. Circulate from house to house plain, pungent, religious tracts, and in your second or third visit you will learn that the vicar has forbidden their reception. Assemble a few men and women

Digitized by Google

'perishing for lack of knowledge,' that you may preach to them the message of reconciliation, and ten to one you will be informed, in the course of a few weeks, that the occupant of the house in which you labored has been served with a notice to quit. It matters nothing that your efforts are free from all tinge of sectarianism, they are regarded as intrusive, irregular, and mischievous. How many villages are there in this country, in which, through clerical influence, it is impossible to hire a room, within the narrow walls of which to proclaim to rustic ignorance the tidings of eternal life! How many more in which, from the same cause, misrepresentation, intimidation, and oppressive power are brought to bear upon miserable and helpless dependents, and to scare them beyond the reach of the gladsome sound of mercy! How many millions of souls, hemmed in on all sides by this worldly system of religion, cry aloud from the depths of their ruin to earnest Christians for help, whom, nevertheless, State-churchism renders it impossible to reach! It was, doubtless, with this melancholy picture before his eyes, that Mr. Binney so emphatically pronounced his opinion, — fully justified, I think, by the facts of the case, — that the Church of England destroys more souls than she saves." — p. 369.

We are brought back, from whatever aspect of our ecclesiastical affairs we choose to study, to the one evil which impresses all foreign observers of the Anglican Establishment, and which recent events render so conspicuous, — its sacerdotal character. The Church might be excessive in its endowments, aristocratic in its connections, narrow in its creed; but did it pretend to nothing but to be the Nation's Church, these things might easily be mended by the nation's will. It is the claim of a supernatural char-

Digitized by Google

acter, that renders its exclusiveness at once hopeless and intangible. So long as this claim remains uneffaced, no statesman will be able to deal successfully with the ecclesiastical problems presented to him, and must be checkmated in every game he plays with the Episcopacy. We do not say whether the claim be true or false; but we do say, that the Church which refuses to withdraw it is *ipso facto* disqualified for recognition as *the* establishment in a nation of mixed religions. Prohibited by its principles from becoming comprehensive, it must be content with a position less than national. It is the sacerdotal doctrine which involves the whole subject of the Royal Supremacy in such miserable confusion, and renders the constitutional phraseology of the Tudor times wholly inadequate to the exigencies of the present day.* When Henry the Eighth required from convocation an acknowledgment of his prerogative as supreme head of the Church in these

* This is the "Oath of Supremacy":—

"I, A. B., do utterly testify and declare, that the Queen's highness is the only supreme governor of this realm, and all other her highness's dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal; and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, preëminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm; and therefore I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign jurisdictions, powers, superiorities, and authorities, and do promise that from henceforth I shall bear faith and true allegiance to the Queen's highness, her heirs and lawful successors, and to my power shall assist and defend all jurisdictions, preëminences, privileges, and authorities, granted or belonging to the Queen's highness, her heirs and successors, or united and annexed to the imperial crown of this realm."

Digitized by Google

realms, his intention undoubtedly was to provide fully for the consequences of his breach with Rome, and to centre in the Crown *all* the prerogatives which it had hitherto shared with the Papacy. In the appointment of bishops, he had already possessed the right of investing them with their temporalities; he now acquired the right of conferring on them their spiritualities: and nothing remained in the whole process of making or unmaking bishops, to which his prerogative was inadequate. It was not meant by this to reduce the episcopal office to a mere state appointment; else there would have been no occasion, on discarding the Pope, to assume any new power for the King. The purpose was not to lower, or in any way change the nature of Episcopacy, but to exalt the functions of Royalty by absorbing into it the spiritual rights disengaged from Rome. How the lineal Apostleship of the Supreme Pontiff, and the prerogatives inherent in St. Peter's chair, could be imported into the English monarchy, was not very clear. But the difficulty was got over by appeal to the divine right of kings;—a right not questioned in those days, and admitting of easy extension from the sphere of natural to that of Christian polity. In acknowledgment of the royal supremacy in this unrestricted sense, Cranmer and other bishops, on the accession of Edward the Sixth, renewed the tenure of their sees, by taking out commissions for holding them during the pleasure of the Crown. While this notion prevailed, and the sovereign, in addition to the functions of chief magistrate, held a pontifical character, room was left for the maintenance of Episcopacy,

Digitized by Google

as a divine institution, annexed to the sacred prerogative of the Crown, as the officers of state belonged to its civil dignity. In this sense, and in this only, is the royal supremacy extensive enough for its avowed end, namely, completely to block out the Pope from this kingdom. It soon occurred, however, to the stricter reformers, that an oath of supremacy, constructed with such a meaning, contained two positions, — a negative one, that the Pope had *not* in England the supremacy he claimed; and an affirmative one, that the sovereign *had*. The former they could cordially take; but the latter involved crown rights of consecration and ordination which the school of Geneva scrupled to admit. It was important to gain their acquiescence; and unimportant to insist strongly on any thing but the *negative* part of the oath. A further distinction was therefore drawn; the spiritual prerogative, as conceived in its plenitude by Cranmer, was divided into two elements, — the supernatural or pontifical, in virtue of which the Crown would cease to be a lay power, and might confer divine offices; and the simply ecclesiastical, in virtue of which the judicial powers of the Crown were to be liable to no exceptions, and the canon as well as the civil law was to find its final interpreter upon the throne. By insisting only on the latter of these two, and expressly disclaiming "authority and power of ministry of divine service in the Church," Elizabeth relieved the scruples of her Calvinistic subjects, and rendered the oath unobjectionable to all but Catholics.* The

* See Hallam's Constitutional History, Vol. I. p. 152.

Digitized by Google

consequences of this restriction of the spiritual supremacy are curious. It no longer involves any thing which the Dissenter of the present day could hesitate to own: the jurisdiction of the Queen over all persons and in all causes which by law may be brought before ecclesiastical tribunals, is not a matter which he is at all concerned to deny. Were authority claimed, indeed, over himself in the concerns of his religion, he would not acknowledge it; but no such claim is made; the concerns of his religion do not fall within the legal scope of "spiritual and ecclesiastical things and causes": were they comprised within the terms of the oath at all, it would be under the designation of "things temporal"; for as the Nonconformist minister is a layman, so we apprehend is his church, or his synod, a secular body in the eye of the law. But not even under this title are any affairs of dissenting conscience included: for the Queen's temporal supremacy goes only to the execution of the laws, and cannot encroach upon that which the law leaves free; and this is the case with the Nonconformist's faith and worship. We conceive, therefore, that Cardinal Wiseman mistakes the purport of this crown prerogative, when he says:—

"The royal supremacy is no more admitted by the Scotch kirk, by Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Independents, Presbyterians, Unitarians, and other Dissenters, than by the Catholics. None of these recognize in the Queen any authority to interfere in their religious concerns, to appoint their ministers for them, or to mark the limits of their separate districts, in which authority has to be exercised."—*Appeal*, Sec. I.

Digitized by Google

Certainly, the sects in question recognize no such authority. But no such authority does the royal supremacy include; for where the law assumes no control, the Queen can have no jurisdiction.

But why, in this view, need the Catholics themselves object to take the oath? The royal supremacy no more includes any power to appoint their bishops than to name a Methodist superintendent; and might apparently be acknowledged, without prejudice to the reserved rights of conscience, by Dr. Wiseman no less than by Dr. Bunting. A Presbyterian minister is tried for heterodoxy by a synod which hears the cause and decides by vote. A Catholic priest is accused of publishing an heretical book, carries his appeal to the Pope, and is required to recant. With neither process does the English law interfere; and if on this account the Presbyterian trial is no infringement on the royal supremacy, how can the Papal decision be so? The oath guards the sovereign as carefully (though less *in extenso*) from domestic as from foreign interferences with the prerogative; and if it lets in the Synod can hardly keep out the Pope. In both cases the interposition of some other person than the Queen for the adjustment of a dispute, or the determination of a doubt, is of the nature of mere private influence, and no more constitutes a trespass on the royal supremacy, than the moral power of a father over sons who have attained their majority, or of arbitrators over disputants resorting to them. The Catholic, therefore, is not hindered from taking the oath of supremacy by the spiritual allegiance which he owes to the Su-

Digitized by Google

preme Pontiff; for he can pay that allegiance, and freely move within the pale of his church affairs, without encountering the crown prerogative at all. There is no "divided allegiance" in submitting to a legally permitted influence. The real bar to the Catholic's taking the oath of supremacy lies elsewhere. That oath requires him to say, not simply that the Pope "has not," but that he "*ought not* to have any jurisdiction" within this realm; and this is what he cannot affirm without giving the lie to his faith, which teaches him that the Pope, of divine right, is entitled to that appellate jurisdiction, which, for three centuries, England has improperly denied to him. In refusing the oath of supremacy, the Catholic must therefore be regarded, not as the jealous guardian of his own spiritual allegiance, but as protester against others' spiritual defection. By the act of 1829, which sanctions his refusal and substitutes another form, the right is reserved to him of maintaining this protest; and of living in the State as a person who must always desire an ecclesiastical restoration of the realm of Rome.

Observe, finally, the operation on the Established Church of Elizabeth's lowered interpretation of her spiritual supremacy. The pontifical prerogative of the sovereign being thrown away, the divine rights of Episcopacy lose their support and go a-begging. Whither, now, are they to look for their legitimation? Formerly they claimed in right of the Holy See. That title being cancelled, they held of the consecrating power of the Crown. This having disappeared, what becomes of them? They ought, as

Digitized by Google

dependents, to have shared the fall of their superior, and vanished from existence; leaving to the bishop's office mere human functions of ecclesiastic administration, for which a civic nomination would serve as adequate credentials. But against this, the liturgies and offices of the Church were, and are, a standing and insuperable obstacle. Who was to say, "Receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of our hands"? Who was to convey the stewardship of Sacramental Grace? Was the disposal of Regeneration in the patronage of the Lord Privy Seal; and the power of Absolution in the gift of the Wool-sack? So long as these supernatural pretensions formed an integral part of the Church theory, they must be vested somewhere, and pretenders would not be wanting. There were but two resources,—to reaccept the authentication of Rome, or to transfer to the Anglican hierarchy, as a pontifical aristocracy, the prerogatives alienated from the monarchy of St. Peter. In either case, the concession made by the Crown is of no profit to the kingdom: the claim resigned is simply reinvested. The whole Papal authority exists among us still; and in dividing the spoil, the Crown obtains only the Court of Arches, while the Episcopacy come in for the keys of heaven and hell. Thus the pontifical rights, which seemed to have become as disconsolate ghosts in the sixteenth century, are again in the body in the nineteenth. Like the unclean spirits, had they been cast out by the finger of God, with the simplicity of a heavenly command, they would have gone to their own place for ever. But under the clumsy exorcism

Digitized by Google

of human policy, they have but wandered awhile through the dry places of ecclesiastic controversy, seeking rest and finding none: till, seeing the old Anglican abode not only temptingly swept and garnished, but still empty of any diviner spirit, they have returned whence they came out; and, being now many instead of one, threaten to make the last state of that Church worse than the first. The Queen's supremacy and the nation's Protestantism have far more formidable rivals in the sacerdotal pretensions of the Church, than in the titles of Catholic prelates and the boundaries of Papal dioceses.

Politicians, we are aware, have no belief that any mere theory, like that of a priestly polity, can have the least practical effect. They do not deny that the Liturgy is too Romish; but they rely on its being counteracted by the Calvinistic tone of the Articles, and on the tendency to either extreme being virtually lost in the predominant good sense and moderation of the English people. They admit that the Church scheme of religion cannot stand the test of a severe, or even of a lenient logic; that it is not a consistent whole, and bears evident traces of the contradictory energies from whose balance it sprung. But this, they contend, which spoils it for the thinker, recommends it to the nation. There is something to suit every taste; and he who finds his own sentiment reflected from the Collects does not care to test it by the Combination. Compromise is the secret of all united action and united profession; and the moment you reconcile the formularies with each other, you split the Church itself to fragments.

Digitized by Google

Coherence among men must be brought about by incoherence in their creeds. It is the peculiar glory of the Anglican theology, that it has found a *via media* between the unreformed and the over-reformed Churches; enriches the cold and rigid lines of Puritanic faith with mediæval coloring; places a mixed trust on Scripture and tradition, — on history and the soul, — on the priest and the prophet, — on reason and authority, — on truth and the magistrate. In this way extremes are avoided, controversies kept within limits, and the tempers of men retained around a centre of mildness and sobriety. The spirit of the Church impersonates itself to the imagination of the statesman in the form of a bland Archbishop, entirely composed of unrealized inclinations; a little evangelical; something of a Church reformer; not too easy with his clergy; skilled in charitable words, but patient of exclusive things; content to leave doctrine as he finds it; making no attempt to steer the Church in storm, lest he should wreck it, but punctually sitting at the helm and reading prayers for it.

This favorite style of defence is like the thing defended, — a *via media* between truth and falsehood; and suits the national taste for a ready-made opinion, without the trouble of thought or a care for consistency. It is certainly true, that, in order to effect combined action, individual views must give way, and a course be assented to which probably no one person sharing in it regards as the best. But there is a manifest distinction to be drawn between partnership in external *action* and partnership in the

Digitized by Google

profession of *conviction*. You are member of a committee for building public baths: one man wants them at the east end of the town, another at the west; the secretary wants a brick structure, the treasurer insists on stone; the chairman is anxious for a Roman design, but you have brought a plan from Flanders. In these various suggestions there is no absolute right or absolute wrong. No one imagines that his own proposal has more to recommend it than a certain preponderance of advantage; and he feels that his duty is satisfied when he has fairly pointed out the grounds of his preference. Nothing that could be gained by substituting his scheme for another would be worth the risk of forfeiting coöperation. The primary end for which the combination was formed is gained by compromise, and would be lost by unyieldingness. But suppose you are on the council of a political league, engaged in preparing a declaration of principles. One member moves a preamble announcing the doctrine of natural equality; another, equally intent on the abolition of serfdom, believes from Scripture in the anointing of kings. One is convinced that colonies are a mere excuse for cost and jobbing, and should be turned adrift; another, no less zealous for free trade, relies on colonial empire as a main element of political security and greatness. One is for an immediate appeal to arms; another is president of the Peace Society, and insists on disclaiming the right to take away human life. What would be the reception of the mediating councillor who should rise and say: — "Gentlemen, it is plain there must

Digitized by Google

be some mutual concessions. There are many points on which we differ; whether there are any on which we agree all round is the less necessary to determine, because on the one practical conclusion we all concur, — We must have a declaration, and must uphold our league. The document — since it must be signed by us all — cannot be all of one complexion; no gentleman at this table can expect to deal with it as a private paper embodying just his own system of ideas. But among reasonable men, looking mainly to the practical end of securing adherents to our body, there can be no desire to press severely on particular views, and perhaps questionable niceties. The Address must have many paragraphs, and will enable us to assign to each gentleman a fair proportion. If the preamble is too strong on human equality, it can be corrected by referring in the body of the paper to the divine rights of the Crown; and if our Quaker friends put too much emphasis on their doctrine of passive resistance, we can soften it by a postscript demanding that the militia be called out. In this way, nobody will be able to read through the Declaration without finding something to approve; all tastes will be suited; each one of ourselves, having for the sake of his principles put his name to something that qualifies them, will be deterred, in case of controversy, from pushing his doctrine to any hurtful, and (let me add) vulgar extreme. Amid the general support of sensible people, we can easily make all dissentients appear in the light of egotists or fanatics."

If such proposals as these would be intolerable in

Digitized by Google

relation to political profession, they are certainly not less so in reference to religious. In affairs of external action, there is a more or less expedient and effective, in every gradation. In declarations of faith, there can be no such gradation, nor any of the liberty of honest choice which it allows; every proposition presents itself to the mind as either simply true or simply untrue; and the assent to it is either absolutely veracious or absolutely unveracious. The rule of integrity is not satisfied when a man has provided for the due assertion of a truth; it prohibits his ever being consciously a party to the assertion of a falsehood; nor can he compound for a moderate allowance of fraudulent statements by an adequate mixture of positions heartily believed. In erecting a public bath-house, the supporter of brick and the advocate for stone may come to a fair agreement, by deciding on a brick building with stone facings. But in raising the structure of a Faith, the Catholic and the Calvinist cannot honestly settle their differences by embodying sacerdotal and sacramental doctrines in the Liturgy and Rubric, and throwing the Genevan ingredients into the Articles; and whatever peace is secured on such terms is morally disgraceful to both parties, and can be desired only by those who see no truth in either. In the practical affairs of men, compromise may be brought about by *inclusion* of something that is in favor with each; but in faith and worship, only by *exclusion* of whatever is offensive to any. This, we are convinced, was the principle on which, originally, the services and formularies of the Church were framed. There was

Digitized by Google

no "compromise," in the degrading sense in which that word is now continually employed, — no intentional admixture of truth and falsehood out of complaisance; but simply an abstinence from statements of doctrine in which concurrence seemed impossible. But the incongruous mixture then unconsciously produced is no longer unconsciously maintained. Amid the struggling elements of the Reformation period, when the intellect and reverence, usage and power, were settling their respective claims, the just logical boundary between the new and the old systems was long undetermined: the clearest vision could not discern it: and it would have been surprising, had not attachment to the past preserved some elements which would not bear the scrutiny of the future. The historical development of three centuries has since exhibited the character and fixed the theory of the two religions: we know what belongs to each: and the controversies of the last fifteen years have clearly elicited this result, *that where there is pontifical doctrine, there cannot be Protestantism; and that where there is a* jus divinum, *there can be no harmony with a free State.* This is emphatically the discovery, legible in the awful handwriting of Providence, upon the surface of this age; dazzling enough to startle even the heedless multitude, and a timely warning to those who would restore the Church before her days are numbered. It is now too late to sound the praises of compromise: when once it has become detected inconsistency, its charm and power are gone; it fascinates only the sceptic contemner of mankind; it repels the truthful and the noble. The

Digitized by Google

time is come when the discordant elements must part: either within the Prayer-Book, to the revival of the Church; or, in the persons of her disciples, to her dissolution. So far is the preservation of the *via media* from being an essential to permanence, that it is the most certain mark of a transitional and temporary Church. No half-way scheme of doctrine, throughout the ages of Christendom, has been able to sustain itself in any strength; Semi-Arianism, Semi-Pelagianism, moderate Calvinism, are transient phenomena of human thought, — like some seedless annual, whose root dies in the ground, — not like the natural grass, that grows for ever. What scheme of belief, on the other hand, is so coherent and compact, what ecclesiastic administration so uniform and unbending, as the Roman Catholic, whose duration and extent are above rivalry? It is vain by any artificial adjustments, any eclectic composition, to coerce incongruous sentiments into partnership. In each great scheme of faith there is a vital principle of its own, which rules its development and prescribes the conditions of its vigorous growth. To force two into the same organism — like thrusting a grape-seed into an acorn before you sow it — is either to destroy both, or to waste the strength of one in killing the other, and then throwing it off when dead. Does not, indeed, the history of the English Church itself show the inefficacy of a mixed system as an instrument of union? Is it true that she has retained the attachment of both the Catholic and the Protestant class of minds in her communion? On the contrary, she has secured the love of neither.

Digitized by Google

No Church born of the Reformation has driven out half the number of Dissenters: and as to Romanists, she will have created more in this generation than the Jesuit missionaries could steal in a century from any other communion. Never was incompetency proved on a scale so gigantic; never was pretence more preposterous than that of the Church to unite believers of every shade, — with a third of the religious English Dissenters, and a third of the empire Catholics! Have we not a right to complain, as British citizens, that, boasting to be national, she cannot keep us together? Nay, that she is incapable of even defending us against the very religion she was erected to exclude? — and, what is worse, actually reproduces it and supplies it with a centre of fresh European life? Moreover, we have the melancholy conviction, that nothing whatever will be done towards cutting out the root of the evil. The clergy just now are very angry with the Catholics; which is taken by simple people as proof that they are truly Protestant. There are some, indeed, who look a little further, and suggest a revision of the Prayer-Book. But what are the alterations contemplated? A shortening of the Morning Service, — a better selection of the lessons, — an omission (unless as a record) of the Athanasian Creed, — with such a reform in the rubrics as may exclude Tractarian histrionics: all good proposals in themselves, but leaving the active source of evil entirely untouched. The real mischief of such a phenomenon as the temple of St. Barnabas is not in what meets the eye, not in vestments, lights, and postures in the

Digitized by Google

piscina and the almoric, in the sign of the cross or swell of the organ; these things are in themselves matters of perfect indifference, and, were they mere externals, might be as harmlessly allowed as the candles retained by the Lutherans not only in their churches, but even in the baptismal service at private houses. But for the *meaning* they embody, the new excesses in these things would be mere spiritual fopperies, which a bishop might usefully castigate with peremptory contempt; they are, however, much more than this; they are more even than the mere court etiquette attached by custom and accident to the Papal system, disagreeably reminding us of discarded mummeries; they are the symbols of one special thought, the clear, deliberate, precise language handed down for its picturesque expression; the ceremonial that surrounds a certain doctrine, which, if true, is the living principle, if false, is the consuming disease, of pure Christianity. What is that doctrine? That the clergyman is a priest, and the communion-table an altar, and that, by letters patent from God, it is only through the hands of one and the rites of the other that Divine grace can enter any soul of man, and sin depart. This it is which alone gives significance to the new practices: and this, unfortunately, has full warrant from the Prayer-Book, and, while it stands there, bids defiance to the resources of Episcopal discipline. Till it is cancelled, the Tractarian acts with reason in introducing his favorite emblems; the bishop, in prohibiting them, acts with no reason at all; the one has an idea to convey, the other has none to exclude; in the hands of

Digitized by Google

the one the contest is for a principle, in that of the other it is an empty logomachy. So long as that element remains, there could be no more foolish task than the reform of the rubrics and the simplification of the ritual. You might dress your clergymen like Quakers, furnish your chancel in the style of Cromwell, make your communion-table like a joiner's bench, and set it to the north; you would find that, as silk and surplice do not make a priest, neither can coercive drab and sackcloth unmake him; that it is not the altar decorations, but the altar doctrine, in which the grievance has its life. Take the sacerdotalism away: say, with Luther, that every Christian, with only the inward ordination of the Spirit, is on a par with priest or bishop, and that the minister is but the delegated teacher, qualified "proprio motu et generali jure";* and all the millinery and upholstery, and mystifications of the sanctuary, will spontaneously wither, never to appear again. Some of our prelates, many of the clergy, and vast numbers of the laity, are well aware of this; they know, too, that the priestly doctrine, with much that hangs upon it, has no real life in the heart of the English people, and is little better than a monstrous unveracity; yet they will leave it as it is, will screen it as a fundamental of the Church, will gladly divert attention from it by

* See his Essay to the Bohemian brethren, as cited by Dr. Moehler in his "Symbolism," Robertson's translation, Vol. II. p. 92. Luther here, as was too often the case, deforms a noble truth with coarse invective. "Catholic ordination is exhibited as a mere daubing, shaving, and jugglery, whereby naught but lying and idle fools, true priests of Satan, were made. One could likewise shave the hair off any sow, and put a dress on any block."

Digitized by Google

a vigorous attack on the mere external symptoms, which engage the eye and the passions of the multitude. Englishmen have ceased to look for transparent simplicity and directness in their clergy, except in matters which lie remote from the dogmas of their profession, and, in persons like the Anglicans, seized on by some new, perhaps dangerous idea. In the mass of the order, and especially in the prelates, the class feeling is well known to be so strong as to overpower the natural virtues, and enfeeble the Christian graces; to give, unconsciously to the possessor, but conspicuously to the observer, not only the double tongue, but the double mind to work it, to teach the outspoken the arts of reserve, to bind the living and truth-loving intellect to the dead bodies of the very errors which, in days of nobler prowess, itself has slain, and even oblige it to provoke them into vivacity again, and show them off as if they were alive. No amount or solemnity of profession can afford the least index to a clergyman's real state of mind in a Church where Catholics, Calvinists, Latitudinarians, all protest, by hundreds, their entire and detailed assent to the same elaborate system of theology; the result is, that the preachers of truth in their own place and office are the very last persons in the nation to be believed; that the pulpit is as little trusted for sincerity as that appointed resort of hired advocacy, the bar; that the letters of the bishops in crises like the present are not read as reliable expressions of the writers' minds, but watched as diplomatic manifestoes, and studied as the artful movements of a game. Hence there is no hope that

Digitized by Google

any bishop will do more for the Church than die in it. To seize the moment for effective revival, the moment of detected incompetency, of inevitable change, of reanimated Protestantism, of lay interest and enthusiasm, of pacified nonconformity, and by trenchant reforms call back the alienated portion of the nation, is an enterprise beyond the aims, and, mainly on that account, beyond the power, of those to whom England is ecclesiastically intrusted. And so not even the glaring offence of the hour will be removed; but, after stripping off a few of the blossoms and leaves of Romanism, the sacerdotal root will be left in the ground, — to put forth anew, whenever brought once more under the light of a genius intense enough to nurture it, and under the husbandry of Oxford Apostles, God will give the retributive increase.

But, we shall be asked, will you not allow people to believe in priests and their divine prerogatives? Would you pass a law to hinder it, or compel the High-Churchmen to erase the doctrine from their system? Far from it; let every man be entirely free to profess and worship according to his conscience. We only say, that this doctrine operates as a disqualification for the exclusive alliance with the State of any Church that holds it; and can never be politically harmless, except where either all sects or no sects are endowed by the commonwealth. The reason is plain. When a body of men tell us, that they are sole trustees under God of a certain set of dogmas and channels of grace, they are bound to guard the sacred deposit with incorruptible care, and

Digitized by Google

to hand it down from age to age without the shadow of a change. Their primary obligation is the preservation of an immutable identity of teaching and administration. On the other hand, the primary necessity of a free people is an incessant change of thought and character; and the primary duty of their government is to readapt their institutions to the successive states of the national mind. To suppose that this law of change in human society will make an exception in favor of religion, is a weak defiance of all experience. However fixed the objective sources of faith may be, they cannot fall on changing minds with unchanged results. New arts, new literature, new wealth, — an altered distribution of social classes, — a quickened circulation of ideas, — a copious importation of foreign thought, — inevitably produce a different people, before whom you cannot present the problems of religion with only the old results. The State, we conceive, must look upon this as *a fact;* and, ere committing itself to exclusive alliance with any body of disciples, must stipulate, as an indispensable condition, that they have a *flexible* faith; not, of course, that individuals are to be called upon to hold loosely by their own convictions, but that there is to be no bar to silent and spontaneous modification from age to age. This is precisely the condition which a sacerdotal communion is bound to repudiate: if it remain not *inflexible*, it is a traitor to its stewardship: and so incompatible are the duties of the two, that the highest faithfulness of a templar church is supreme unfaithfulness in an Establishment. The coexistence of the two functions

Digitized by Google

— political and pontifical — is simply impossible; either the nation must give up its will, or the church its trust. This is better understood at present by the priest than the statesman; and is shown with admirable irony in the following sentences: —

"As physical life assimilates to itself, or casts off, whatever it encounters, allowing no interference with the supremacy of its own principle, so is it with social and civil. When a body politic grows, takes definite shape, and matures, it slights, though it may endure, the vestiges and tokens of its rude beginnings. It may cherish them as curiosities, but it abjures them as precedents. They may hang about it as the shrivelled blossom around the formed fruit; but they are dead, and will be sure to disappear as soon as they are felt to be troublesome. Common sense tells us they do not apply to things as they are; and if individuals attempt to insist on them, they will but bring on themselves the just imputation of vexatiousness and extravagance. So it is with the Anglican formularies; they are but the expression of the national sentiment, and therefore are necessarily modified by it. Did the nation grow into Catholicity, they might easily be made to assume a Catholic demeanor; but as it has matured in its Protestantism, they must take, day by day, a more Evangelical and liberal aspect. Of course I am not saying this by way of justifying individuals in professing and using doctrinal and devotional forms from which they dissent; nor am I denying that words have, or at least ought to have, a definite meaning which must not be explained away; I am merely stating what takes place in matter of fact, allowably in some cases, wrongly in others, according to the strength on the one hand of the wording of the formulary, and of the diverging opinion on the other. I say, that a nation's laws are a na-

Digitized by Google

tion's property, and have their life in the nation's sentiment: and where that living intelligence does not shine through them, they become worthless and are put aside, whether formally or on an understanding. Now Protestantism is, as it has been for centuries, the nation's religion: and since the semi-patristical church which was set up for the nation at the Reformation is the organ of that religion, it must live for the nation; it must hide its Catholic aspirations in folios, or in college cloisters; it must call itself Protestant when it gets into the pulpit; it must abjure antiquity; for woe to it, if it attempt to thrust the wording of its own documents in its master's path, if it rely on a passage in its Visitation for the Sick, or an article of the Creed, or on the tone of its Collects, or on a catena of its divines, when the age has determined on a theology more in keeping with the progress of knowledge! The antiquarian, the reader of history, the theologian, the philosopher, the Biblical student, may make his protest; he may quote St. Austin, or appeal to the canons, or argue from the nature of the case; but *la Reine le veut;* the English people is sufficient for itself; it wills to be Protestant and progressive; and fathers, councils, and schoolmen, Scriptures, saints, angels, and what is above them, must give way. What are they to it? It thinks, acts, and is contented, according to its own practicable, intelligible, shallow religion; and of that religion its bishops, its divines, will they or will they not, must be exponents."—*Newman's Lectures*, p. 18.

We simply borrow the lecturer's argument, and turn it round. He says to the Anglican ecclesiastics, "As an established clergy, you cannot be faithful to your priestly vows": we rather say, "As faithful to your priestly vows, you cannot be an established clergy." He says, "The nation will constrain you

Digitized by Google

not to serve your conscience": we more respectfully contend, "Your conscience will constrain you not to serve the nation." The divergence of the two obligations is forcibly brought home to us by the demand, just now so frequently urged, for the revival of convocation, or the organization of some new chamber, for the settlement of ecclesiastical affairs. The question immediately arises, In what capacity is the body to meet? — as priesthood, or as establishment? — as divine corporation, or as human? — as answerable to God alone, or under responsibility to the nation? On the answer to these questions would depend the whole composition of the assembly. Who are to be represented? If only the association of persons bound together by belief in the Articles and baptism into the same communion, then must the representatives be all Churchmen, if not all priests; they must qualify at the parish altar, and produce credentials from the parish register. But if the national *Establishment* is the thing to be represented and discussed, then must the representatives be drawn indiscriminately from the whole body of *Establishers*, that is, from the nation at large; and the Assembly would be but a duplicate of Parliament. In the former case, the definitions of doctrine and rules of discipline adopted would be simply declaratory of the sentiments of a particular sect: they could have no binding force in reference to the ecclesiastical constitution of the country: they could not be imported as new conditions into the compact with the State. The utmost that could be allowed would be, that they should come before Parliament

Digitized by Google

as *proposals*, — if approved, to become law; if disapproved, to terminate the partnership between the nation and the Church, and to forfeit the temporal endowments of the spiritual corporation. In the latter case, the decrees adopted would determine the doctrine and discipline on which the nation resolved to insist in any ecclesiastical body henceforth admitted or retained for endowment. They would obtain, after royal assent, the validity of law: and it would then remain for the body hitherto established to decide whether it will accept these conditions, or transfer the national trust to others who are prepared to do so. As a body under priesthood, the Church is a corporation with a charter from on high; and when its affairs are in confusion, they must be set in order by prayer and discussion with closed doors on the part of the corporators themselves. As an Establishment, the Church is a corporation with a charter from the State, and when its working needs revision, it must be brought before the legislature, for reform, not only in the administration, but, if requisite, in the constitution of its charter. This distinction was of little moment during the first century after the separation from Rome; because throughout that period the *persons* composing the State and those composing the Church were the same: the divine charter, however variously interpreted, was universally recognized as creating an incorporation which was to be coextensive (at the least) with the nation: the idea prevailed of one only Christian communion; and even those who could not join in its actual conditions hoped to obtain changes which

Digitized by Google

would bring them in. All ecclesiastical differences lay, therefore, within the Church, among parties struggling to grasp and wield in their own sense its undisputed and undivided authority. In the disputes which arose between the temporal and the spiritual powers, — in the variance, for instance, between Convocation and Parliament as to the nature of the royal supremacy, — the collision was not between two classes or bodies of men, but between two functions of the same body; between the clerical and the lay element of a single communion. But since the Restoration, these conditions of the problem have been passing away; and it is impossible any longer to consider the State and the Church as merely two aspects of one community. The Act of Uniformity was the commencement of that fatal policy which seeks unity by exclusion, instead of by comprehension. By driving the spiritual exiles to despair of their return, it set them on providing separately for themselves. Compelled to regard their ejected condition as no longer provisional, they gradually founded their own institutions, educated their own clergy, and in baptism, ordination, creed, and worship formed themselves into independent societies. From that moment was realized a condition entirely new; namely, the coexistence of many communions on the same soil. Still, the time had not fully come when the State and the Church should be composed of different persons; for the Nonconformists, in turning their backs upon the Church, had, for a time, to forfeit their position in the State; and, for relief of conscience, paid the price of their civil rights. At

Digitized by Google

first treated as enemies, then endured as μέτοικοι, they slowly approached a recognized isopolity. Now, however, they fully belong to the State, without belonging to the Church; the personal range of the two bodies is no longer coextensive; and the Church, in its relation with the State, has to deal, not with the laic function of her own life, but with an eternal power, partially in the hands of those who do not own her. The State, in other words, has outgrown the Church; and in readjusting their relations, the legislature cannot narrow its view to the old ecclesiastic circle, and work within the conditions there laid down; it is bound to provide for the nation in its enlarged proportions; and, as in the case of a small borough expanded to a great town, to throw down the municipal boundaries, and modify the corporate rights, in a way to render them commensurate with modern wants. In the performance of this undeniable duty, Parliament, amid many embarrassing problems, would have the advantage of one principle perfectly clear; namely, that, if the Episcopal Church is to continue in her established position, her sacerdotal doctrine must be withdrawn, and her pretended charter of sacramental trust be surrendered; because *this* the whole nation beyond her communion, and probably the vast majority within it, entirely disown. Whatever differences there may be among the sects, on this the very fact of their nonconformity proves their unanimity. Were this removed, the work of producing a truly National Religious Establishment would indeed be only begun. But while it stands, not even

Digitized by Google

can a beginning be made; a hopeless bar remains between the growing margin of the nation, and the contracting area of the Church, — a bar, moreover, scarcely less hateful to the laity within, than to the unbaptized multitude without. In the present temper of the country, there is a happy consent between the Dissenters, and all but the retrograde portion of the Church, most favorable to a reform of the Prayer-Book in this sense. The external forces that lie beyond the Anglican pale would raise no storm to interrupt such a work; they would either sleep around it in indifference, or watch it with supporting sympathy. All the turmoil would spring up to the interior. Certain it is, that, under such a charge, Dr. Pusey could not accomplish his vow to die in the Church of England. The moment her "priesthood" is converted into an unpretending "ministry," a Tractarian secession is inevitable. But however formidable such an occurrence might be, whether it took the shape of a new schism or of a Papal relapse, its evasion or postponement must incur a far greater danger, — the perpetuated reproduction of Romanism by the agency of the Church herself. On this point we have the judgment of a very competent observer, who watches the course of events from the Papal side. The Rev. W. Maskell, having joined the Roman Catholic Church, records the following opinion in a letter to the *Morning Chronicle*: —

"If ever the day should come that both the Prayer-Book and the Articles should speak, whether upon this side or upon that, no matter which, one uniform, consistent lan-

Digitized by Google

guage, controversy between members of the English Church and Catholics must take a very different line. For myself, I do not hesitate to declare, that, in my judgment, *the strongest of all our hopes rests on the continuance, unchanged, of the present English formularies;* and that no immediate accession to us of numbers, however large, would compensate in the end for the slower but more sure gain, from an unceasing flow into the One Church of men inquiring honestly for truth."

Leave to Rome undisputed occupation of the sacerdotal field, and the domain will soon cease to be enlarged. The preparation thus made for nationalizing the Church must no doubt be followed up. The *first* effect is to throw out a large body from her communion: and unless this be compensated by reinforcements from without, her position in the country will be less tenable than ever. But the grand obstacle in the way of such reinforcements is removed, when the clergy no longer pretend to hold the dogmas which they teach by any higher tenure than that of private judgment and conscience in interpreting the sources of divine knowledge. Their responsibility retires within the modest dimensions of their own personal sphere; and asks only that their conscience and their teaching shall have free scope of activity. It ceases to be aggressive; and being conscious of no title which others do not equally possess, they exchange the insolent *ignoring* of their neighbors for respectful, however firm, dissent. Among men thus minded, of what religion must the National Church be the organ? Assuredly of the *national* religion. It is vain to pretend a

Digitized by Google

duty on her part to sanction nothing but the absolute truth. She has no resources for discriminating the absolute truth. With the repudiation of pontifical claims, she loses the false semblance of an objective oracle for the determination of doubts; and can do no more in this matter than produce in her teachers the subjective conditions favorable for the discernment of truth, — the sound learning, the Christian temper, the unanxious thought. If these claims are to be rejected, not in vindication of indispensable freedom, but as means of tighter bondage, — if, when they are gone, we are left with a creed simply narrower by their expulsion, — better let them remain. But we are persuaded that both laity and clergy are ashamed of the ridiculous affectation of a dogmatic unity to which every Sunday publishes a thousand contradictions. They well know that, in spite of this pretence, the English Church harbors every great heresy that ever provoked the peremptoriness of Rome, and among her writers of renown can produce the modern counterparts of Arius and Eutyches, of Pelagius and Sabellius; nay, the mere politician appeals to these notorious differences as redounding to the praise of the Church, and giving evidence of the wide scope of liberty practically enjoyed by her members. We accept the fact, but must refuse the praise. For the question occurs, whether the Church *gives* this latitude, or whether her members *take* it. We cannot consent to credit her with a result, which all her resources are always strained to prevent before it takes place, and to disown afterwards; but which she is at once

Digitized by Google

too weak to suppress and too uncandid to acknowledge. Those who belong to her communion enjoy the latitude they have, not because they belong to the Church, but because they live in England; the free secular spirit of which is too much for the ecclesiastical influence in the opposite direction. Heretical clergymen and bishops are *forced* upon the Church by statesmen who look only at their personal qualities, or by patrons who appoint from considerations of family, not of creed. For the praise of liberality the Church must wait till she has spontaneously relaxed some one of the dogmatic restrictions by which she fences her rigid orthodoxy round. So far as, without doing this, she admits heterodox theologians, it is by a shameful unveracity. *That* is a price too dear to pay for any dogmatic comprehensiveness: nor can the Church relish such admiration as was once lavished by an *esprit fort* on some of the sceptic priests of the first French revolution. "Our clergy, to be sure, are all perjured; but then, how charmingly liberal!" If we are called on to choose between an intellectual and a moral good, we are constrained, not to applaud the freedom, but to condemn the falsehood; — the more so, as all the intellectual freedom is undeniably furnished by the spirit of the nation, and all the moral falsehood by the system of the Church. Latitude on these terms has none of the benefit of an allowed liberty. It is a mere forfeiture of unity without the gain of comprehensiveness; for when thought larger than the creed gets in, it is only on condition that it be not scrupulous. Our Church has thus neither enjoyed

Digitized by Google

the advantages of freedom, nor secured the rewards of oppression. She has, however, effectually destroyed the pretended plea, that in her teaching we have a witness to some system of coherent and unalterable truth. Absolute truth then being wrapped, if amongst us at all, in impenetrable disguise, *cannot* be an object of selection: and we can find no claimant for establishment, if it be not the *national* religion: and what that may be is happily a thing easily determinable by vote. In revising the formularies, nothing should be retained which conclusively offends the convictions of any considerable class of worshippers: its retention would be a positive grievance to those whom it would repel: its omission would compromise no religious teacher, provided he were free to supply it in his personal preaching, and to seek a congregation in sympathy with his belief. Such a relaxation of the dogmatic bond would probably not add a single new mode of sentiment to those already existing in the Church. It would be simply a change from an insincere to a sincere allowance of inevitable and actual varieties;—a change which, we are convinced, would be acceptable, not only to the essentially veracious mind of the secular Englishman, but to that pure and faithful religion which, in every communion, is impatient of pretence, and fears no reality. The State, at all events, cannot, in its dealing with ecclesiastical institutions, proceed upon any abstruse theological theory, or limit its basis to the decisions of Nice, of Chalcedon, or of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. It can only accept the *facts* before it, and recognize the

Digitized by Google

religion which has living possession of the mind of the nation, and declares itself unmistakably in their labors and sacrifices on its behalf. There are but two ways in which this can be done: either the strongest of the actual sects may be taken as expressive of the general will, to the exclusion of all the rest; or they may be all assumed as partial declarations of national faith, to which, as a whole, no one of them is competent to give complete expression. The first method cannot be persisted in, without exposing the most divine element of civilization to a series of violent revolutions, and enthroning, in naked *might*, the very influence which is to teach the world the inviolable sanctity of *right*. The most powerful spiritual body in the country may yet comprise but a minority of the inhabitants. Its favored position will be felt as an injustice, and will naturally provoke a crusade, which, on the first confederation of the hostile forces, will succeed in the work of deliberate destruction, and then miserably scramble towards a fortuitous reconstruction. The second method is undeniably the true exponent of the present facts of society, and can alone restore religion to its tranquil and dignified position above the secular rivalries of the world. We believe that the great mass of the English laity would rejoice in such a change in the formularies of the Church as would allow the gradual return to conformity of classes now excluded by scruples which no honest conscience can despise. Is it objected that but a slender creed would remain if it omitted every thing which was inadmissible by Wesleyan and Baptist, Indepen-

Digitized by Google

dent and Arian? We reply, in the first place, that with the slenderness or fulness of the creed, the State, in determining the conditions of established support, has nothing to do. If there be enough in it to train good men and citizens, to nurture the sentiments of duty, and, by spontaneous reverence, bring about, and in a better way, all the highest ends of law, there is sufficient to entitle it to recognition. It expresses the weighty fact, that the noblest aims of civil society are embodied in the private faith of its members, and anticipated by their aspirations. We reply, in the second place, that whoever felt the creed to be defective should be at perfect liberty to fill it in from his own supplementary convictions. Beyond the public liturgies, which should be much shortened, range might be left in every service for the free ministrations of the clergyman. It would be no doubt necessary, in order to secure harmony, under this free system, between the pastor and his people, to give the congregations a voice in the appointment of their ministers. But against this no objection can be made, except on behalf of the patron's interest, — an interest which, through long abuse and sordid sale, has become so odious to the religious feeling of the country, as to be plainly marked for destruction, unless speedily redeemed by compromise with the principle of congregational election. If the State, by a regulated education, such as it requires in preparation for the other professions, provides the *class* of religious teachers, while the natural affinities of churches have play in allocating *individuals*, security is taken that religion shall be purified by passing through an

Digitized by Google

enriched and practised intellect; and yet an appeal is left to that nameless spiritual instinct by which alone the presence of a living heart can be detected. Under such an arrangement, the Church would soon cease to be disgraced by all the shameful abuses of a close corporation. It would no longer be true, that, out of twelve thousand benefices, eight thousand are transmitted by purchase and sale, and upwards of three thousand in the possession of non-resident incumbents. It would no longer be endured, when once the laity are admitted into the concerns of the clergy, that laborious pastors should starve on £35 a year, and be indebted for £30 of it to Ecclesiastical Commissioners,* some of whom, for sixteen years, have enjoyed from the Church an annual revenue of £10,000, and appropriated west-end fines to an untold amount, modestly estimated at half a million. We fear, indeed, that the admission of more popular control into ecclesiastical affairs affords the only hope of remedy for mismanagement and misuse, more flagrant than can now be found in any department of the State. The diocesan and capitular conscience is too easy; the Parliamentary check is too slow, and too much broken by official obstructions; and nothing but a local and provincial element of lay administration, the recognition of a municipal

* See "Return to the House of Commons of the Number of Small Livings augmented by Grants at the Disposal of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners," June 4, 1850. The living referred to is the Perpetual Curacy of Staindrop, Durham, page 31 of the Return. How many livings of £5 a year are unaugmented by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners is not recorded.

Digitized by Google

principle in Church affairs, will suffice to break up the sacred oligarchy, and let in the honest daylight on the mystification of their affairs. The rudiments of such a scheme must be sought in the enlarged powers of each congregation for self-government, and the concession to it of a voice in the election of its pastor.

We confess, however, to a doubt, whether a plan of comprehension such as we have imagined is not now too late. The Church, long abandoned to the slumber of a lazy conservatism, is, indeed, awake with a better spirit, and abounds with devoted ministers and high-minded laymen. But in an age so rapid and impatient as ours, repentance may easily miss the tide; and we fear that, after every effort and concession has been spent, England will remain with many churches instead of one. The free development of separate denominations has proceeded very far. It has created a number of powerful organizations, each of which, in its continued operation, has worked for itself a distinct social channel, and appropriated a scarce disputed domain. It has covered the populous portion of the land with chapels and school-houses, and so accumulated around the sectarian centres of administration a vast cluster of properties, all in active use. It has called into existence many societies, occupying different spheres, for the advancement of popular education, and several colleges for the cultivation of the higher learning, and the special training of a Christian ministry. After English society has so long *set* into these forms, it may well be doubted whether their contin-

Digitized by Google

uance has much dependence on the phraseology of the Liturgy or the breadth of the Articles. When, too, it is remembered, that, if the variances in dogmatic theology were all happily smoothed away, questions of ecclesiastical discipline would arise, and that to some Nonconformists Episcopacy is offensive, while others insist on the independent isolation of each knot of worshippers, it will scarcely appear feasible to remodel any one communion so as to embrace them all. Is there, then, no hope of that return to greater unity, after which, amid all the din of seeming strife, the spirit of the nation evidently pines? We do not despair. Nonconformity is now aware of its inadequacy to the complicated wants of the nation; feels the heavy burden of voluntary taxation; and begins to reckon the waste of a number of rival efforts of the same kind upon the same spot. Moreover, the affinities which originally distributed the religious population into its several masses are rapidly changing; repulsions are acting around the centre of every sect, and attractions making themselves felt across the borders. Only the habits of a declining principle of vitality hold the present forms together; the incipient life of the future is loosening them for unexpected recombination. Looking at the whole matter from a point beyond the inclosure of sects, we see in both the Church and the Dissenters aptitudes for special work which cannot be interchanged between them; and we see vast national endowments which ought to be made subservient to the impartial spiritual culture of the whole people. The State is the trustee of those endowments; and,

Digitized by Google

as judge of the rules by which they should be dispensed, may become the point of unity in which the various laborers and recipients may find their separation lost. It is not unnatural to look at the course of public education as affording some augury in relation to the direction of ecclesiastical affairs. The competing societies of the Church and the Dissenters (the National and the British and Foreign) with the Wesleyan and the Catholic school associations, have so far relaxed their severe voluntaryism as to stand in common relation to the committee intrusted with the distribution of the Parliamentary grant for education. Separate in their actions, free in their several movements, they meet in the presence of the State. The inherent feebleness of voluntary institutions, and the difficulty felt by an aristocratic corporation like the Church in grasping the whole population of this land, may surely lead to a similar ecclesiastical partnership, through the mediation of the civil government, commanding for the purpose, not a mere Parliamentary grant, but the vast remains of a long-wasted and abused Church property. Thus to gather up all the religious agencies of the country, under the headship of the State, without encroachment on religious freedom, would doubtless be a most arduous and delicate task; yet, in the hands of a great statesman, by no means impossible. We can imagine a series of measures by which the end might be gradually approached, without apparent offence to the most sensitive conscience. Were the Act of Uniformity repealed, the use of the services of the Prayer-Book, in their complete and unal-

Digitized by Google

tered form, would no longer be obligatory on the clergy; and a power of adapting the modes of worship to the convictions of the worshippers would be left. Episcopal ordination, however, would still remain indispensable; so that the external boundaries of the Establishment would not thus be enlarged, though its interior latitude would be increased. In order to secure this further advantage, liberty might be given to parishes, after some regulated compromise with the patrons, — to elect their own ministers; — no one being eligible except a person with a University degree and ordination or recognition according to the usages of some one denomination known to the law. This would enable a parish to become Wesleyan or Presbyterian, if such change accorded with the predominent feeling of the place. To meet the financial problems to which such cases would give rise, it would be necessary to vest in an Ecclesiastical Administration, fully responsible to Parliament, the whole of the Church property, with powers, duly guarded and checked by locally elected Boards, of redistribution according to the real exigencies of each neighborhood. But not only must Nonconformist *persons* be rendered admissible; Nonconformist institutions and property must be made susceptible of ecclesiastical adoption. To accomplish this, it might be provided that, on the surrender of any Dissenting chapel to the ecclesiastical trustees, such chapel should lapse to the National Church estate; and the congregation, ceasing to be a private club, would be incorporated into the public system, and, on certain conditions, would become

Digitized by Google

entitled to a stipend computed in the compound ratio of its necessities and its beneficent activity. The conditions referred to need not be complicated, though their definition would require the utmost clearness and caution. They must be absolutely free from every possibility of interference with religious belief, and comprise no other inquiry than into the extent of social service rendered by a society as instructor of the poor and the young; and in the estimate of this a large influence should be assigned to the judgment of the district. To secure good service in the clergyman, a minimum of stipend should be fixed, and a part of it always drawn from the efforts and award of his congregation or neighborhood. Not one of these provisions would in the slightest degree touch the independence of either the Church or the Dissenters. They do not meddle with the Prayer-Book, except *negatively*, by declining any longer to enforce its compulsory use; and the members of the Episcopalian communion might freely settle for themselves, in any representative assembly possessing their confidence, whether they would alter or wholly retain their present formularies. A similar freedom of internal organization and government would be left with every sect. Nor, again, is there the least interference with those Nonconformist Societies who might choose to remain on the basis of pure voluntaryism. They are exposed to no disadvantage, made liable to no tax, and, for aught they would ever meet with in their own experience, might remain unconscious that any alteration had been made. One political change of seri-

Digitized by Google

ous magnitude would, however, be involved in such a series of measures. All ground would be removed for retaining the bishops in the House of Lords. The religious communion to which they belong would be only one among several churches embraced within the national establishment; and if the Episcopalians were to have their spiritual Peers, so must other religious bodies now introduced into a similar relation to the State. Justice would require that this political privilege should be either abolished or extended; and it cannot be reasonably doubted which method of equalization would be most agreeable at once to the political and the religious sentiment of the country. It is not our purpose to fill up this outline. We sketch it simply to indicate a course, which, however strange to the imagination now, appears to us more practicable — no less than more desirable — than either the unyielding retention of the Church as it is, or the entire repudiation of all national interest in religion, and the utter sacrifice, to the ends of mere financial economy, of the noble ecclesiastical endowments inherited from former times. We see nothing inconsistent with the sentiments proper to the devoutest Christian in a recognition of religion, left to its free development, as the highest department of a nation's culture; and think that the objection to this springs rather from low and irreverent notions of the State, than from any elevated conception of the offices of the Church. Not till the old Greek reverence for the public polity of a nation shall blend itself with the spirituality of

Digitized by Google

the Christian's private and personal faith, will the restless antagonism of egotism with social power in secular affairs, of individual conscience with general law in morals and religion, cease, and pass into a harmony.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

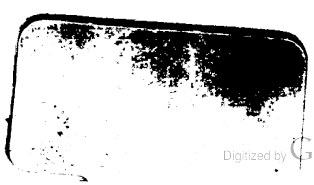
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Acme
Bookbinding Co., Inc.
100 Cambridge St.
Charlestown, MA 02129

Digitized by Google


Digitized by Google